Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010
Responses from Working Session 3:

“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

The comments listed below were generated by the participants in attendance during Greek Life Commons planning event held on Saturday, November 6th, 2010.

The responses were taken directly from the participants. No responses were omitted and no editing occurred (other than a spell check). The category headings included below were created after the event and once all of the information was compiled. This was done in order to organize the comments and responses to assist the reader.

Participants at the event were responding to the following discussion question. “What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

What will the Greek Life Commons look like?

- Unifying entity. Greek life commons will present our case to RPI, we need someone to supports Greeks
- Work for excellence in each individual chapter, not singularly for the Greek life as a whole. Success as individual chapters for the whole campus will propel the campus Greek life atmosphere to improve as a whole.
- Honor and highlight the accomplishments of Greek Alumni.
- Make Philanthropy/Leadership/Community/Self-Development the central goal
- Work within the chapters first to have them realize the potential of Greek Life and that is so much more than just a social outlet. Once chapters collectively understand this statement then it is easier for the collective Greek community to show RPI their potential. This is something key to think about when we are recruiting them.
- Power Greeks have is that we can get a large group of people to places and events when we want to
- Greek life will help keep them involved once they graduate.
- Commons as an umbrella to unite but not to restrict
- Eliminate disconnect between administration and Greek life. We need to understand and respect each other!!
- Not overly structured so that we keep our individuality
- A framework as opposed to hard and fast rules
- A real effort, not just trying to look good on the surface

(What Will the Greek Life Commons Look Like – continued)
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010

Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- Focus on building stronger chapters where you enjoy your brothers and sisters and the rest will come naturally
- Better communication between Greeks and the other organizations (public safety, facilities, administration) to make sure the events run smoothly, not so much Greek organizations vs. the school and looking for something to go wrong
- Democratic agreement...delegates from houses at IFC and PanHel need to vote on the agreement.
- Keeping students involved while they’re on campus, i.e.: Greek life, will help keep them involved once they graduate.
- DON’T LET Greek life commons become an ideal vs. a reality
- Regular council meetings
- Friendly, vs. contentious relationship between Greeks and RPI
- Work for excellence in each individual chapter, not singularly for the Greek life as a whole. Success as individual chapters for the whole campus will propel the campus Greek life atmosphere to improve as a whole.
- Stronger houses helping weaker houses to improve Greek life overall.
- Have a support system for multicultural Greek organizations almost like another IFC or PanHel.
- Must be a collaboration 100% 50-50 equal say and equal vote
- Develop Chapter improvement plans for goals 5 years out for each chapter and form overall Greek goals and plan
- Provide training for scholarship chairs, house managers, risk managers
  - Alongside Learning Assistants
  - Involved with CDC for professional development
  - Work with public safety
- As Greek chapters we are individuals, with unique traits, and should not lose this concept while unifying as a Greek community
- Competition can be dangerous, we always try to be the best that we can, we know that we cannot be the best that there is. We may not be able to be the very best chapter in our fraternity, there are bigger schools, richer students, it is mighty hard, as long as we keep striving to perfect ourselves and our fraternity/sorority, what is the need for constant competition, what is the need for constant strife.

*(What Will the Greek Life Commons Look Like – Continued)*
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010
Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- If a Chapter is having an event. The GLC can
  - Help promote the event among other houses and other commons. Spot in Poly? Electronic Greek Newsletters?
  - Help set up the event. Venue? Logistics? Guidance?

Campus Space / Centralized Location

- “Greek Suite” – centralized location; hang-out area
- Stronger and more organized IFC & PanHel
- Housing Initiatives, creation of a “Greek Row” – Greek pride
- Physical location for Greeks to meet, exchange ideas, forum perhaps in union? Greek Lounge
- Place in the Union for Greeks
- A place where RPI / Greeks have a place to discuss ideas
- A centralized location/infrastructure to focus Greek efforts.
- Make more housing available to Greeks, so that all Greek organizations can have houses.
- Better office space → easier access
- Greek Lounge / Greek Area in Union
- Improved space for Chapters to host events
- Centralized space to hold Greek Week
- Space for houses to hold events and help with advertising so that other houses can benefit from what everyone else is doing
- Centralized location for Greek affairs w/ Office for Dean Hunt & small lounge
- A Greek house similar to the alumni house, which would be awesome. Greek study halls, IFC meetings, AIGC meetings, inter-Greek meetings.
- Don’t need a whole Greek building, just a big space where we can use, an office for matt, a conference room for him, and an auditorium for about 100 people (step one: get a space for Greeks, step 2: get a building for Greeks)

Programming Ideas
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010

Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- Recruitment, Finance, Leadership, outreach to Alumni, etc.
- Greek night at Pub or other such events to show pride and spirit
- Recognize us for our achievements
- RPI funded Greek retreats to encourage bonding and pride
- Discount coupons and specials for Greeks at Ben & Jerry’s, bookstore, other campus places
- TIPS training should be school sponsored
- Promote positive relationship between school and Greeks. Maybe through cocktail hours?
- Greek Week needs more support from the school
- Need to be able to wear letters at events and on campus more often
- Dinners to bring leadership together from different houses
- Group Troy Clean Up
- Open Leadership workshop opportunities
- Similar leadership discussions: finance talks with finance, risk mgmt talks with other risk mgmt chairs, etc.
- More frequent meeting like this where students and alumni from all chapters gather for an annual look back at the GLCA
- Tailgating and more organized support of and at athletics events
- Starting new traditions on campus to replace the ones that we have lost
- Greek Hall of Fame
- Leadership training workshop with specific officer types
- All Greek letters day
- Greek weekend is designed just for Greeks, the message is not being conveyed that it should get non-Greeks excited to go Greek. There should be a spot in it for non-Greeks to come in and try to facilitate excitement to go Greek.
- More awards and recognition for chapters that consider chapter size
- PR campaign to highlight Greek accomplishments - All Greek GPA higher than All Campus average GPA, etc.
- holding events for all the new members to get together and interact with each other, building friendships with other chapters before they are initiated

(Programming Ideas - continued)
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010

Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- Partnerships with NRB and Student Orientation and other RPI run programs that need man power
- Greeks could host work shops
- Leadership, career seminars, invite guest speakers, Greek Leaders from other schools
- Joint IFC/PanHel philanthropy events (or events in general)
- Greek Hall of Fame
- Communication campaign
  - Start internally – help campus and independents accept and understand Greek life and the commons agreement
  - Expand to parents, incoming freshman, potential high school students
  - Alumni news, national campaign
  - Send out info to prospective students
  - Look at MIT model, other successful school/Greek systems
  - Benchmarking
- Foster friendly competition between houses – Barker Trophy? Expand into new fields.
- Poster competitions between houses, invite faculty, admin, guests. Posters display house achievements throughout the year
- Host a Greek leadership conference – if we want to be recognized as the national Greek leadership/commons model, we need to hold these events
- Host a UIFI event, or have IFC and PanHel attend Northeast NIC/PanHel conferences
- Alumni weekend – more events run jointly by PanHel and IFC for Greek Alumni and undergrads (Spring Greek Alumni weekend)
- IFC PanHel Social Events (tailgating games, hockey nights)
- Program of inviting faculty and administration to dine at houses. (So they can listen to us and get a better feel of what we're all about).
- IFC take a leadership position in promoting a public service day once a semester or a few times a year.
- Partnership between RPI and Greeks for volunteering around campus and Troy community.

(Programming Ideas - continued)
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010

Responses from Working Session 3:

“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- Have alumni come back and talk about their experiences, both professional and other.
- Faculty, staff and administration wear their letters on campus one day (interesting to see how many of them are Greek).
- Honor and highlight the accomplishments of Greek Alumni.
- Presentations at SO, about what Greek Life can do for you as a student.
- Give IFC/PanHel More power, more structured (maybe combine them, but maintain separate recruitment councils)
- Traditions such as Greek week, etc.
- Focus on grouping houses together for large campus events.
- Make events like Hockey games cheaper or free to encourage more participation, which will improve school spirit.
- Have accounting and law services available to Greek life, specifically for smaller houses that have less available manpower and resources for completing these tasks.
- Improve Greek Weekend: more Olympic style events same weekend as concert big party
- Bring back the Block Parties lots of fun a sense of community involvement
- Greek Career Fair, by Greeks for Greeks. Greek Alumni come back to get jobs for Greeks (Could be a great incentive - Might cause hard feelings, however should be no different. Open to whole campus however some advantage for Greeks such as extra hours.)
- Greek Poly Section where our newsletter will go.
- IFC and PanHel say something to keep updates
- Greek promotion to parents
- Admissions Day, Tours, SO session, NRB, FYE
- Build mentorship throughout alumni relations, will provide all of Greek life with speakers and information sessions to benefit
- Larger Greek life events to bring back Greeks from every house to celebrate together
- guest speakers to put on programs
- Greek Olympics/IFC Sports (Be responsible for scheduling IFC Sports.)

(Programming Ideas - continued)
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010
Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- Bigger force behind Greek Week
- Inter-fraternity competition - Tie in with concert or other big campus event
  - Greek Week Events on a field to show school spirit (tug-a-war, Greek Olympic champions)
  - Group participation points for houses participation in sporting events or tailgates to promote school spirit
- IFC/PanHel Events that foster healthy conversation (Ongoing trivia events. Weekly games with point tallies. Include reward in 5-star for chapters that have a certain percentage at events.)
- Greek Scavenger Hunt
- Greek Variety Show
- Topics: Networking, Leadership/Followership…
- Provide training for scholarship chairs, house managers, risk managers
  - Alongside Learning Assistants
  - Involved with CDC for professional development
  - Work with public safety
- Have alumni help present programming to houses
- Have a stronger Greek week, perhaps a carnival behind commons run by Greeks where freshman can come and be excited and see the fun side of Greeks.
- Greek weekend needs to be amped up!
- Carnival philanthropy event for kids or the Troy Community where each fraternity & sorority has a station
- Greek event during NRB

**Needs**

- Need a leader for Commons that understands Greeks and Greek system in order to integrate (now Matt Hunt)
- Can the GLC help hold RPI accountable for the things that they say they should provide but don’t?
- We want it in writing
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010

Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

- Eliminate disconnect between administration and Greek life. We need to understand and respect each other!!
- Programming budgets – make sure our budget is relatively in line with the rest of the budgets
- Students must be leaders in this Commons. This should be promoted so that when other schools see our system, they don’t say look what RPI did, but rather look what the RPI students are running.
- Need to be able to wear letters at events and on campus more often
- Strengthen smaller houses (in numbers)
- Promote positive relationship between school and Greeks.
- Greek Week needs more support from the school
- Adjust divide between men and women: cohesiveness between chapters, fraternities more focused on individual goals than women groups
- Action vs. Rhetoric: actually doing something instead of talking in circles for years
- Expected timelines with important milestones
- Clearly articulated responsibilities for both chapters and RPI
- Give IFC/PanHel More power, more structured (maybe combine them, but maintain separate recruitment councils)
- Shared Greek calendar
- Need to stop focusing on simply looking good on the surface and need to be more real with our efforts and what we are trying to do
- Revolving Loan fund so undergraduate chapters can borrow to improve houses, to strengthen smaller houses.
- Change the focus to building stronger chapters where you enjoy your brothers and sisters and the rest will come naturally
- Keeping students involved while they’re on campus, i.e.: Greek life, will help keep them involved once they graduate.
- No live-in advisors – need freedom to act as self-governing body
- Better communication between Greeks and the other organizations (public safety, facilities, administration) to make sure the events run smoothly, not so much Greek organizations vs. the school and looking for something to go wrong
- RPI must be there to support us, not to police us
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010
Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

(Needs – continued)

- IFC and PanHel will represent us as 25 percent of the student body, more links between the administration
- Transparency and getting recognized for what we do
- More awards and recognition for chapters as well as taking into consideration the size
- Greek Week needs more support from the school
- Delegates from houses at IFC and PanHel need to vote on the agreement.
- IFC & PanHel should meet every other week or monthly to actually set goals and achieve objectives.
- Keeping students involved while they’re on campus, i.e.: Greek life, will help keep them involved once they graduate.
- Shuttles should be running to houses.
- Clear definition of Greek Houses as either on or off campus entities
- Public Safety should respond to all chapter houses calls.
- Must be clearly defined GLCA Document (Needs to be approved by delegates before it is implemented. Are there rights we as Greeks want to protect in this document? Does everyone sign?)
- More accessible Greek Dean, more resources, become link to Administration
- Greek Monetary Fund - For Scholarships (merit and need based), as a lender for chapters in emergencies.
- Give IFC/PanHel More power, more structured (maybe combine them, but maintain separate recruitment councils)
- Provide Office of Greek Life Resources for Dean Hunt to represent ¼ of the student population (Professional & Undergraduate Staff)
- Making the administration more aware that while there may be issues between chapters, we are a Greek organization as a whole and we do support each other
- Increase standards and accountability of Greeks (Philanthropy, Anti-Hazing*, Scholarship, Leadership)
- Transparency
- Student council for Greek commons
- Regular council meetings
- Five year plan- Mission Statement not just a vision
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010
Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

(Needs – continued)

- Friendly relationship between Greeks and RPI
- Work within the chapters first to have them realize the potential of Greek Life and that is so much more than just a social outlet. Once chapters collectively understand this statement then it is easier for the collective Greek community to show RPI their potential. This is something key to think about when we are recruiting them.
- Financial support
- More Staff to more effectively coordinate commons programs
- As needed basis advisor/ live-in people
- Liaison between the chapters and whoever is running the commons
- Money, time, effort, enthusiasm
- Must be a collaboration 100% 50-50 equal say and equal vote
- 1-2 year Plan
  - Collaboration between houses
  - Best practice sharing
  - Improving recruitment
  - Officer Transition
  - Subject of the week for IFC, have collaboration, moving meeting time
- RPI should be more open to Greeks and should listen to our advice. Through all of our history in our organizations we have a lot of experience leading our community and we should have more input in the administration.
- Need a group to oversee this commons. Undergraduate and administration collaboration in the group. IFC and PanHel must be involved in the commons administration.
- Common source for Greek information
- Need Alumni involvement on a mentoring level treat the alumni base as one big alumni base to help all chapters/Greek life on campus
- We need an oversight board where everyone has a voice
- Need to RPI responsible and accountable for their end of the GLCA
- Greek Congress to go through and ratify and mistakes and every year we sign it. It’s a one year contract and everyone resigns if they feel that held there side of the contract
- Recognize Greeks for achievements rather than only stipulating regulations
Responses from Working Session 3:

“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

(Needs – continued)

- Motivation for chapters to reach the excellence level
  - Monetary/physical recognition from campus for reaching the ideals
  - Means of alumni and national support and recognition of chapters
  - Sending representatives to National conferences and earning national recognition.

- Greater exposure to the incoming class
  - Admissions Day, Tours, SO session, NRB, FYE
  - Greek Life promotion in packets for Freshman and Parents Weekend
  - Website presence → Student Life, Residence Life, Greek Life
  - Demote stereotypes and promote the organizations to the community dynamic

- Better utilization of Alumni Relation
  - Lifelong commitment, needs to be provided by the chapter and RPI community
  - Larger Greek life events to bring back Greeks from every house to celebrate together
  - Promoting use of Alumni House to develop and improve individual house alumni relations
  - Build mentorship throughout alumni relations, will provide all of Greek life with speakers and information sessions to benefit
  - Help define AIGC role and partnership with PanHel and IFC

- Money to help fix up houses that house RPI students
- Money to help get guest speakers in to put on programs
- Bigger push for Greek Week
- An open online forum for chapter officers so they can post ideas for events get feedback, and announce events
- Future Alumni Development (Present benefits to students… networking, future job opportunities, etc.)
- As Greek chapters we are individuals, with unique traits, and should not lose this concept while unifying as a Greek community
- Respect is a two way road, when we see the school showing respect to Greeks, start helping them, then we will also show support for the school.
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010

Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

(Needs – continued)

- Greek weekend is designed just for Greeks, the message is not being conveyed that it should get non-Greeks excited to go Greek. There should be a spot in it for non-Greeks to come in and try to facilitate excitement to go Greek.
- Need to see benefits! Not just requirements and stipulations from RPI

Database / Website

- FAQ on webpage or list of resources for Greek community
- Greek Life Commons Website- interactive, forums, wiki info, contact info
- Shared Greek calendar
- Database of people in each position so that we can get together and chat
- Website, newsletter, server, etc.
- Links to the Greek pages on RPI’s website online.
  - Showing our accomplishments
  - A connection between IFC and PanHel websites
- Common source for Greek information
- Giant server for Greek alumni LinkEd in group just for Greeks.
- An open online forum for chapter officers so they post ideas for events and get feedback & announce events
- Website presence → Student Life, Residence Life, Greek Life

Evaluation/Assessment

- Annual or semi-annual reviews of the system to talk about what is working and what is not
- Defined timelines and designated milestones
- Benchmarking with other campuses (MIT & Lehigh-Advisor, Tim Wilkinson)
- Coalition Assessment Team ~ $12K (Run by NIC and NPC team of 4-5 people to campus contact the NIC to setup. 3-4 day evaluation period of Greek Life)
- Assessments with specific metrics
- Let RPI run assessment
Greek Life Commons planning event – Saturday, November 6, 2010
Responses from Working Session 3:
“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

Documentation

- In writing what is expected of RPI for the Greek Life Commons Agreement, and what is expected of the Greek Life students. This must be publically accessible.
- Commons as document guaranteeing that our finances won’t be caught up in Bursar billing while houses struggle to pay bills
- Clearly articulated responsibilities for both chapters and RPI
- Administrators dedicated to seeing out the Greek Life Commons
- Should be an open document which we can all access at anytime
- Some sort of communication / action plan from dean to Greek org.
- Need clearly defined GLCA Document
  - Needs to be approved by delegates before they implement it.
  - Are there rights we as Greeks want to protect in this document?
  - Does everyone sign?
- Clear definition of Greek Houses as either on or off campus entities
- Five year plan- Mission Statement not just a vision
- Add value to the campus as a whole
- Integral part of the campus that promotes leadership, support, real world preparation, service, team work, social interactions, and enhances academics.
- Implementing the school experience
- Showing the campus what we do
- Definition of Greek Life Commons (Revisions need to be approved by chapters when changed)
- Centralized source of information. (Details needed for the whole school. Check list of events that are needed in each event.)
- Outlining the general statements of what we already signed
- Update the relationship statement to include GLCA
- Clause where Greeks reserve the right for all of the sophomores that can’t live on campus to get housing space.
- Have a process for renewing the Commons Agreement. It should be a renewable contract
Responding from Working Session 3:

“What must be put into place to achieve the vision of a nationally recognized model for excellence in Greek Life?”

(Documentation – continued)

- Develop Chapter improvement plans for goals 5 years out for each chapter and form overall Greek goals and plan
- Greek Life promotion in packets for Freshman and Parents Weekend
- Help define AIGC role and partnership with PanHel and IFC
- Make a “who to contact for what” directory so things can get done easily (Room reservation in Union – Jean Purcell. Etiquette Dinner in Sage, Joanne Powers. Things like that)

Rush

- IFC rush needs to be taken more seriously (If IFC convinces kids to go Greek, then houses don’t have to all sell the Greek system.
- For IFC Rush, houses that participate should be allowed some sort of benefit of being able to rush before houses that don’t participate. I.e. houses that participate in IFC BBQ are allowed to begin rush that following Saturday, houses that refuse to participate will be allowed to rush that following Sunday, one day after.

Questions & Other Concerns

- What is the difference in Eddie Knowles mission vs. Matt Hunts and the current one? What is going with the events and workshops that were asked before?
- When are we considered on campus vs. off campus entity?
- We should get the same treatment as on campus housing.
- Most of us have signed Greek Commons agreement it what happens when were unhappy what happens when RPI doesn't have a word. Resign the commons to add to modifications.
- No live-in advisors – need freedom to act as self-governing body
- Offer tools for houses to explain Greek Life Commons during inner-house officer transitions