



Rensselaer

Dean of Students

Mark Smith

February 27, 2008

Dear Greek Community Members:

The principal goal of "New Initiatives – New Opportunities" is to improve and enhance Greek life as a critical element of the undergraduate experience. Based on the discussion last night at the Rensselaer Society of Engineers (RSE) Chapter house, I am writing to clarify approvals for Fraternity & Sorority Affairs: New Directions – New Opportunities.

For nearly 14 months, three discussion groups consisting of undergraduate students, alumni, Panhel and IFC, and RAA representatives met regularly to discuss issues and prepare recommended actions to improve Greek life at Rensselaer. The outcomes from these discussion groups led to insightful recommendations that would elevate Greek life to the forefront of student life by building a program that would serve as a national model of excellence. I prepared a document (attached) for review by President Jackson. The purpose of this document was to update the status of the initiatives originally put forward in April 2006, reflect outcomes of the discussion groups, and seek her approval to implement a revised Rensselaer Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy and Five-Star Standards Accreditation.

Dr. Eddie Ade Knowles, Vice President for Student Life, approved the Rensselaer Good Samaritan Policy, July 1, 2007. On November 12, 2007, President Jackson approved the document and specifically Revisions of the Institute Alcohol Policy as amended by the Alcohol Policy Review Committee, the Rush-New Member Recruitment Process, and the Five-Star Standards Accreditation. The mandated House Director for every chapter was determined not feasible, in terms of cost for the director and costs to accommodate this person in the house itself, and no longer under consideration.

We felt that it was too late in the Fall semester to convene a meeting to update the Greek community. It was determined that it would be more appropriate to hold this gathering in the Spring semester.

Since the members of the discussion groups represented a broad range of Greek life constituents, I assumed the discussion content and recommendations were shared with respective members of the Greek community. Recognizing that members of constituent groups did not have a chance to review in advance, this is an opportunity to share it now.

As members of the Greek community and campus leaders, it is important to continue this discussion, to evaluate what works and what still needs to be changed on the journey to becoming a model of excellence. To this end, I am convening a working group of representatives from Greek life constituent groups to continue the process developing the "New Directions – New Opportunities" plan, monitor and assess implementation, address emerging issues and, most importantly, share and disseminate information. This represents a continuum along which there will be peaks and valleys; however, the direction remains the same – sustain and enhance the Greek system as an important element of the Rensselaer undergraduate experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Smith".

Mark Smith
Dean of Students