

**AFA / EBI**  
**Fraternity / Sorority Assessment**  
**The Pennsylvania State University**  
**Spring 2005**

This assessment of the overall effectiveness of fraternity and sorority life at Penn State utilizes a national student survey conducted by the Association of Fraternity Advisors (AFA) and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI). It was administered to provide baseline data prior to the implementation of the Minimum Standards and the Standards of Excellence, products of the Return to Glory Greek Pride initiative. Survey topics include the overall fraternity and sorority experience, academics, leadership and personal development, community service and philanthropic involvement, alcohol and other drug usage, diversity, membership education, satisfaction with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, and anticipated alumni activity. It was administered by Web to students who were members of social fraternities and sororities at University Park during spring 2005; 26 other institutions also participated. Student Affairs Research and Assessment coordinated the study at University Park.

In total, 696 Penn State students responded to the survey for a 22.0% response rate and a +/- 3.29% confidence interval. Of the Penn State respondents, 51.0% were female, 49.0% lived in chapter housing (on and off campus), 68.0% were affiliated with their fraternity/sorority for more than two semesters, and 88.0% were white Americans.

In this executive summary, the survey findings are organized into three areas based on how Penn State compared to peer institutions and all institutions. The three areas are: areas of strength, areas to maintain, and areas for improvement. In addition, the summary describes significant differences between the responses of Penn State fraternity and sorority members. For a full version of the report, please visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/fsa.shtml>.

### **Areas of Strength**

Penn State students reported significantly higher scores than did students at peer institutions regarding:

- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED LEADERSHIP SKILLS (including questions regarding assuming positions of responsibility, organizing events, and motivating others) and
- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS (including conflict resolution skills, time management skills, and oral communication skills).

In addition, Penn State students rated:

- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS (such as meeting new people, establishing close friendships, transferring social skills to other settings) significantly higher than did students at all institutions.

### **Areas to Maintain**

When compared to students at all institutions, Penn State students responded similarly regarding:

- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED ACADEMIC ABILITIES (as defined by items such as the ability to establish academic goals, engaging faculty outside of the classroom, organizing time to meet responsibilities);
- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED CAREER DEVELOPMENT (including improving networking skills/interviewing skills and identifying potential career paths);
- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED SELF AWARENESS (such as understanding the consequences of drug use and abuse/excessive drinking, understanding their sexuality, and adopting a healthy lifestyle); and
- ANTICIPATED ALUMNI ACTIVITY (such as the likelihood to attend alumni events, of remaining involved with their fraternity/sorority, and of providing financial support to their fraternity/sorority).

## **Areas for Improvement**

### ***Highest Priority***

When compared to students at peer institutions and to the total sample, Penn State students ranked:

- significantly lower with regard to ATTITUDE CHANGES REGARDING DIVERSITY (extent to which students' attitudes toward those different from themselves had become more negative/more positive) (Note: Penn State ranked second to last when compared to the other institutions.);
  - among the lowest in students' SATISFACTION WITH FRATERNITY/SORORITY OFFICE (as defined by items such as dissatisfaction regarding general support for chapter objectives, clear communication of policies, and leadership training); and
  - among the lowest regarding SATISFACTION WITH FRATERNITY/SORORITY PROGRAMMING (including programming related to academic support programs, mentoring programs, and leadership development programs).
- In addition, the data clearly demonstrate that the prevalence and quantity of alcohol consumption among Greeks at Penn State are considerably higher when compared to Greek students at other institutions.

### ***High Priority***

When compared to students at peer institutions and all institutions, Penn State students rated the following areas significantly lower:

- OVERALL PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS (characterized by items such as satisfaction with fraternity/sorority experience, likelihood to recommend joining, and comparing the cost to the quality of the experience);
- EXPERIENCE CONTRIBUTED TO PERSONAL GAINS (as defined by items such as learning self discipline and establishing a commitment to community service); and
- OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE (both within and outside the university).

## **Fraternity/Sorority Significant Differences<sup>1</sup>**

When compared to fraternity members, Penn State sorority members reported significantly higher:

- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED INTERPERSONAL SKILLS;
- SATISFACTION WITH FRATERNITY/SORORITY OFFICE;
- SATISFACTION WITH FRATERNITY/SORORITY PROGRAMMING; and
- OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE.

When compared to sorority members, Penn State fraternity members reported significantly higher:

- FRATERNITY/SORORITY ENHANCED CAREER DEVELOPMENT and
- ANTICIPATED ALUMNI ACTIVITY with their chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> The significant differences between the responses of fraternity and sorority members were also true for peer institutions and all institutions in the national sample.