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The University of Pennsylvania’s Inter Fraternity Council (IFC) has been a significant member of the university community since 1849. Our member organizations are forerunners of philanthropic contribution, academic performance, and social growth. In the last twenty years, the Executive Board of the IFC has strived to enumerate the various goals for both short and long-term development that, if achieved, would bring the Fraternity community nearer to perfection. These recommendations and milestones have been recorded in five-year plans that are passed down year after year. This year, 2011, the Vice President of Strategic Planning, the current President of the IFC, in collaboration with the IFC Executive Board and chapter Presidents, propose this new five year plan, the next chapter of the fraternity community’s rich and enduring history. The goals described within vary in focus from operational efficiency to philanthropic initiatives as well as community growth, accountability and high academic standards.

Organizational Objectives:
This section provides a brief summary of the broad categories of improvement envisioned by the authors of the plan. It also serves as a guide to the organization of the Strategic Plan.

Academics:
The IFC Executive Board recognizes that as students, the primary goal of any individual member of a fraternal order at the University of Pennsylvania should be academic success. To contribute to the constant improvement of the fraternity community at large, the board and the forum of chapter Presidents are committed to a gradual raising of academic standards over time, increased academic support for fraternity men, as well as additional opportunities to enhance the educational experience of IFC members through funding for events with an academic focus to invigorate intellectual curiosity throughout the fraternity system. The Academics subsection of this Strategic Plan details this commitment to attracting the best and brightest gentlemen in the Penn community to become fraternity men, supporting their growth as students, as well as our commitment to outpacing University-wide grade point averages on a semesterly basis.

Philanthropy:
As organizations of service, nearly every single IFC Chapter has provisions for a dedication to philanthropic efforts written into its own organizational constitution. To ensure that the IFC chapters are at the forefront of these efforts at the University of Pennsylvania, the Executive Board proposes a number of recommendations in the Philanthropy subsection of this strategic plan that will improve tracking of philanthropic progress (to give credit where it is due) as well as a more standardized approach to encouraging Chapters with flagging service efforts. Commitment to service is not only an integral value of the fraternity, but it is also an expectation that the IFC holds over its own member organizations. Accordingly, the Executive Board proposes methods of engaging the fraternity community at large for joint philanthropic efforts that will re-establish IFC organizations firmly, as the most committed and generous student groups at Penn.
**New Member Education:**

Perhaps the most integral aspect of the fraternity tradition is the education of new members as men of honor and intellectual curiosity who respect their peers and the values of their organizations. The New Member Education subsection of this strategic plan provides recommendations for a streamlined New Member Education process. The section details goals for increased access to workshops hosted by various action groups at Penn, best practices of new member educators on the chapter level, and the expectations for a fraternity man at Penn. These expectations of active involvement and honorable conduct follow a member from his time as a pledge well beyond his graduation from the University.

**Benefits:**

In order to provide benefits to members of IFC organizations and to enrich their college experiences, the IFC is pleased to be spearheading a variety of initiatives that will promote involvement in fraternity life as well as engagement with the rest of the university community. These benefits can be categorized as social, healthy lifestyle programming, and alumni outreach. In the benefits subsection of this strategic plan, the IFC Executive Board is proud to detail social benefits in the form of grant funding for alternative social events and partnerships with SAC and SPEC funded organizations to promote the social aspects of fraternity life while engaging with other student organizations. In collaboration with the UA, the IFC will also strive to provide healthy lifestyle programming and funding for mental and physical wellness of individual members. Finally, alumni outreach will be further enabled through increased access to detailed alumni databases, mandatory alumni advisory on a local level, use of the Penn Club facilities in as many cities as possible, and partnerships with Penn’s PASS outreach organization.

**Chapter Growth and Accountability:**

The final subsection of this strategic plan is devoted to chapter growth and accountability. The section details expectations at the chapter level for academic achievement, philanthropic contribution, general conduct, and involvement with the Greek community.

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**Academic Success:**

The IFC will always prioritize the academic achievement of its individual members. In years past, this commitment to academic excellence within the fraternity community has manifested itself in a grade point average minimum for prospective members, mandatory academic advising for new members with sub-standard grade point averages, and the general encouragement of chapters to drive the academic success of new members during the pledging experience. Unfortunately, enhanced academic support for fraternity men is often limited to their time as new members and can be inconsistent across the many chapters of the IFC.

After extensive research on the academic statistics of fraternity men in the IFC, the Executive Board has concluded that a standardization of academic support must be
established to benefit IFC men throughout their college years. Moreover, the role of the Academic Chair of each chapter must be more active and best practices enumerated. Finally, the President of the IFC as well as the Vice President of Strategic Planning and the Executive Board at large have concurred that the minimum grade point average for prospective members, while valid in assessing a man’s capacity to excel academically while participating in Greek life, does not inspire academic excellence. Chapters should always be striving to outperform, as opposed to simply accepting mean (or below-par) performance.

In order to contribute to the Academic resources offered directly to its members and to support IFC members in their quest for knowledge and to satiate intellectual curiosity, the IFC will immediately implement a research grant for projects deemed worthy by a panel of appointed professors and academic advisors.

Action for Academic Success of Individuals:

For New Members:

- The Minimum G.P.A. for all new members will remain 2.5 / 4.

Provision 1

- Prospective new members with a G.P.A. between 2.5 and 2.75 are currently required to seek academic guidance prior to accepting bids from fraternities within the IFC; that threshold will be increased immediately to include prospective members with a G.P.A. below 3.00.

Provision 2

- New members who have received academic guidance prior to accepting a bid from a fraternity will be required to revisit their advisor at the midpoint of new member education, three weeks after signing accepting a bid.
- New members who have received academic guidance prior to accepting a bid will be encouraged to seek academic assistance via tutoring services or private tutors at the outset of the semester.

For Chapters:

The IFC Executive Board has adopted new standards to track the academic success of chapters at large. After extended analysis, we have concluded that the academic standards of the IFC as a whole can be improved through encouragement and intervention of chapters that consistently and significantly underperform male composite grade point averages. These chapters will be identified on a semesterly basis and conform to the below enumerated procedures to reverse negative academic trajectory.

Important Definitions For Academic Strategic Plan

Academically Static Chapters:

Academically static chapters have underperformed the All-Male Composite Grade Point Average for three or more of the last five semesters OR have registered a chapter grade point average of less than 3.1 in the most recent semester.
Academically Troubled Chapters

Academically troubled chapters have under performed the All-Male Composite Grade Point Average by more than .1 for three or more of the last five semesters OR have registered a grade point average of less than 3.0 in the most recent semester.

Action for the Academic Success of Chapters:

**Provision 3**
- All chapters will have an Academic Chair who is recognized by Fraternity and Sorority Life. Academic Chairs will receive a pamphlet detailing expectations and best practices to enable academic achievement.

**Provision 4**
- Academically static chapters will schedule two meetings semesterly with one advisor in Fraternity and Sorority Life. In the first semester, one meeting will be devoted to action plans for individual members struggling academically, while the other meeting will be a discussion of new member recruitment efforts and communicating academic expectations to prospective new members. In the second semester, one meeting will be devoted to action plans for individual members struggling academically, while the other will focus on tracking the academic progress of new members.
- Academically troubled chapters will adhere to all regulations aforementioned for academically static chapters.

**Provision 4: Supplementary Recommendations**
- Academically troubled chapters will be encouraged to restrict bids to prospective members with grade point averages in excess of 2.9.
- Academically troubled chapters will encourage individual members with grade point averages below 2.9 to seek academic advising and/or temporary membership leave.

**Provision 5**
- Presidents of academically troubled chapters must propose and co-sign a two-semester plan in collaboration with their alumni advisor, academic chair, and the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life to boost chapter grade point averages through selective recruitment and/or resources to individual members struggling academically.

**Provision 6**
- The IFC will sponsor a semesterly research grant contest for students of all areas of study. The prize, a grant to fund the research of the winning contestant, will be paid in full by the Inter Fraternity Council, subsidized by contributions from alumni sponsors as well as local business sponsors when possible, and will be between $500 and $1,000 dollars. Securing the necessary funding for this grant will be the responsibility of the Vice President of Academics.
Supplementary Academic Programming
   The Vice President of Academics will strive to organize semesterly workshops, free of charge, on websites and graphics for fraternity men.

Inter-Fraternity Council Speaker Series
   In collaboration with the Undergraduate Assembly, the Vice President of Academics will also arrange for at least one speaker event per semester as part of the Inter Fraternity Council Speaker Series. These events will be co-funded by T-Change, the IFC and a host fraternity. The Vice President of Academics will propose a roster of possible speakers and an event date at the beginning of the semester to be decided on by the Executive Board of the IFC.

Career Service Workshops
   The Vice President of Academics will strive to create an exclusive relationship with the Career Services office to enable networking, internship opportunities and informational sessions before on and off campus recruiting.

Community Service and Philanthropy:
   To ensure that the IFC chapters are at the forefront of philanthropic and service oriented efforts at the University of Pennsylvania, the Executive Board proposes a number of recommendations in this strategic plan that will improve tracking of such initiatives (to give credit where it is due) as well as more formal encouragement of chapters with flagging efforts. The Executive Board proposes methods of engaging the fraternity community at large for joint philanthropic efforts that will re-establish IFC organizations firmly, as the most committed and generous students at Penn.

Executive Board Community Service/ Philanthropic Planning
   Inter Fraternity Council organizations are organizations of service and philanthropy. Continuous and consistent participation in philanthropic initiatives and service-oriented projects is an expectation that the IFC Executive Board holds over every single member organization.

Provision 7:
   - The Vice President of Community Service will ensure that on a semesterly basis, the IFC Executive Board has organized and implemented at least one service and one philanthropic event for IFC Chapters to support through participation, co-hosting, or funding. Each of these events will be directly sponsored by 50% of the IFC member organizations; thus, every chapter will actively and sincerely participate in at least one per semester. This is the minimum service requirement for every single chapter. The Vice President of Community Service will determine the nature and extent of required involvement for each event.

Provision 8:
   The Vice President of Community Service will immediately design and implement a standard reporting system for community service and philanthropy
involvement and progress. Philanthropy chairs of individual chapters will complete this survey monthly and the results will flow directly into end of semester chapter reports.

New Member Education:

The new member education process is perhaps the most integral formal procedure of fraternity life. Every new member must learn the values of his respective fraternity, build consideration for the traditions and heritage of his new brothers, and earn their respect in return. In the next five years, the IFC will take a more involved and structured approach to the enhancement of the new member education program. Under the guidance of the Vice President of Recruitment and New Education, the IFC will pursue a seamless process that incorporates learning to all aspects of Greek Life.

**Provision 9:**

In the first two weeks of new member education, *all* new members will be required to attend a twenty-minute seminar hosted by the President of the InterFraternity Council. This seminar will detail the expectations of fraternity men under the IFC for the duration of their time at the University of Pennsylvania. Also included in this seminar will be a briefing of the rules and regulations that govern fraternity life, so that there is no ambiguity regarding disciplinary measures, event registration policies and self-governance beyond the first few days as a new member. The first of the Greek Life 101 seminars will take place during the bid ceremony in 2012, to ensure that the ratifying Executive Board implements this new feature of new member education immediately.

**Mandatory New Member Education Workshops**

Over the last few years the InterFraternity Council has increased the size and scope of the new member education workshops hosted by various safety, diversity, and health focused student groups at Penn. In order to standardize and streamline this entire process, whereby every new member is required to attend at least one workshop during the pledge education period, the Inter Fraternity Council, under the guidance of the Vice President of Recruitment and New Member Education will organize a two day new member education fair. During this time, the student groups the host new member education workshops will communicate their respective messages to large portions of the incoming new members. Current requirements are:

- Every new member must at attend at least one workshop devoted to diversity celebration. These workshops focus on sensitivity training for new members and encourage discussion of race, religion, sexual preference and other personal attribute issues.
- 75% of all incoming pledge classes will attend workshops on fire safety.
- 75% of all incoming pledge classes will attend workshops hosted by DART to emphasize drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

**Provision 10**

- 75% of all incoming pledge classed will now be required to attend workshops hosted by DART to emphasize drug and alcohol abuse prevention.
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Provision 11:  
- The Vice President of Recruitment and New Member Education will enable the fulfillment of these requirements in a “quick and organized fashion” by partnering with the appropriate student awareness groups to organize the New Member Education Fair in a logistically feasible and streamlined process. This fair will take place before the end of the six-week new member education period. Ideally, the fair will take place over a two to three day span when multiple sessions of every workshop (required or otherwise) are offered. The current method of irregular and infrequent opportunities to fulfill the requirement is no longer desirable considering the growth of the program in scope (vis-à-vis organizations that would like to present to incoming fraternity members).

Academic Success of New Members  
Recent research suggests that, contrary to popular belief, the majority of fraternities within the IFC do not experience chapter grade point average drops during new member education. Some experience a negligible decrease (less than .1), and fewer still (approximately 1.5 chapters per year) experience significant (greater than .1) drop in grade point averages during that period. Even so, new members of fraternities at Penn undoubtedly face issues of time management. Because Greek men are active students, it is important for them to manage their priorities, balancing the rigors of academic obligations with the excitement of their new membership in a fraternity and their duty to learn about brotherhood in their own chapter.
- The IFC will continue to encourage an increasing devotion to mandatory study hours during their own new member education regimens.
- The IFC will explore funding for free food during Greek study halls on select nights of the week.

Provision 12:  
- The Inter Fraternity Council will identify houses that regularly (during 2 of the previous 3 new member education periods) experience significant drops in grade point average. These houses will be required to partner with the Vice President of Recruitment and New Member Education during the first semester of the academic year to create a plan for the coming pledge season and to combat this trend. The President of the house may choose to more carefully assess the academic and time management ability of the chapter’s prospective new members before issuing bids, and to institute a more closely monitored study hall system during the six week new member education season.

Hazing  
Hazing is against the law and directly contradicts the traditions and values of every IFC organization as well as the fraternity community at large. As a part of the New Member Education Workshop Fair, the IFC will host its own workshop regarding hazing, and peer pressure prevention strategies. The IFC has a zero tolerance policy with regard to hazing, and will continue to impose disciplinary measures on chapters that break University policies before, during, or after the new member education period. The Office of Student Conduct investigates most allegations of hazing.
New Member Educators

New Member Educators, sometimes referred to as “Pledge Masters” will attend training hosted by VPUL in coordination with Fraternity and Sorority Life and Presidents will be made aware of the repercussions associated with New Member Education infractions.

Benefits of Greek Life:

The President of the IFC and the Vice President of Strategic Planning share a vision for the gradual perfection of the fraternity community over time. That vision is based on one fundamental principle, which is that involvement in Greek life should be a part of the ideal college experience, specifically at the University of Pennsylvania. In order to make that vision a reality, it is crucial that the IFC attract and serve the best and brightest Penn students every year by offering benefits to all members throughout their time as students and in some cases, after graduation. These benefits will promote involvement in fraternity life as well as engagement with the University community.

Social Benefits

In partnership with the Undergraduate Assembly, the IFC has outlined channels of available grant funding for alternative social events and educational programming. Collaboration with Student Activities Council (SAC) and Social Planning and Events Committee (SPEC) funded organizations will promote the social aspects of fraternity life while simultaneously encouraging engagement with other student organizations. The Treasurer of the IFC will design a system for individual chapters to apply for funding through the IFC’s partnership with these organizations and others to achieve efficiencies and likelihood of acquiring funds. Information regarding available sources of funding will also be made available each semester so that chapters can take advantage of these opportunities. Such information can be found in the UA’s project completion report for Greek Life funding, filed December, 2010.

Healthy Living

The IFC will immediately pursue healthy living projects to provide members with the most important health related resources from which they can benefit. The IFC must encourage healthy living practices such as nutrition, safe sex, and fitness and will work with the UA and student wellness organizations to provide condoms, digital scales, and exclusive use of fitness facilities during peak hours to fraternity men. Also, the IFC will strive to provide healthy lifestyle programming and funding for mental and physical wellness of individual members.

Alumni Outreach

Funding for alumni outreach will be made available through partnerships with Penn’s PASS organization. Alumni databases will be made more accessible, chapter will have mandatory alumni advisory on a local level, and the IFC Executive Board will work to make use of the Penn Club facilities financially and logistically feasible for fraternity men in as many cities as possible.
Chapter Growth and Accountability:

The backbone of the IFC Five Year Strategic Plan is the accountability of the organization as a whole as well as that of the individual member chapters. Thus, in order to promote chapter growth and accountability with regard to the goals and expectations within, the plan revolves primarily around the procedures listed in this section to drive operational success.

IFC Executive Board

Because of the nature of the goals enumerated in this plan, the IFC Executive Board must, on a yearly basis, re-visit the plan, assess the extent to which it has been fulfilled, and make adjustments where necessary. The IFC Five Year Strategic Plan is a constitutional document, and changes to its content must be voted through the forum of chapter Presidents and Executive Board members. The objectives in the four categories of fraternity life improvement are specifically delegated to the appropriate Executive Board members. The President of the IFC will complete a report on their progress mid-semester, and the report will be disseminated to, among other important University figures, the President of the University of Pennsylvania, the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, and the Presidents of the chapters of the Inter Fraternity Council. Other short-term goals of the Executive Board to ensure operational efficiency include:

- Involvement in New Student Orientation for promotion of involvement in Greek Life.
- More frequent correspondence by the Vice President of Strategic Planning outlining the implementation of the Five Year Strategic Plan.

and

Provision 13:

Financial transactions including but not limited to the payment of dues and fines will be possible via an online platform. This online payment option will be available no later than September 1, 2011.

The IFC Executive Board will take a more active approach to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of its various chapters. On a semesterly basis, the IFC Executive Board will publish a report, detailing the efforts and shortcomings of the best chapters “in good standing”, as well as those that have struggled and/or failed to meet the requirements and expectations set forth in the strategic plan. The benefits of being in good standing will include but not be limited to due consideration in issues of judicial inquiry, financial support for alternative and academic events, and preference in bids for host status of select events such as Greek Week social gatherings.

Provision 14 Implementation: Assessing the Standing of IFC Chapters:

- In previous strategic plans, the IFC has aspired to create a “point” system to assess the success of the IFC member organizations. The system was never implemented because the benefits of high “scores” were either unexplained or unsatisfactory. Moreover, the IFC had not implemented a system whereby low scoring fraternities would be penalized or incentivized to improve. The IFC
chapters who have been determined to be substandard in performance on a consistent basis will work through their issues with their national organization and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Chapter Management: Best Practices
The members of the IFC Executive Board will document best practices for their successors as well as their chapter counterparts. For example, the Vice President of Academics will create a guide to be distributed to Academic Chairs of individual chapters for their success.

Provision 15: Written Commitment by Presidents and Executive Board Members
At the beginning of their term, chapter Presidents and every member of the Executive Board of the Inter Fraternity Council will read and sign this five year strategic plan so that they are fully aware of the policies and objectives within. Failure to communicate these goals will be the source of ambiguity regarding oversight, and arbitrary decision making for the years to come.