

## **Strengthening Greek Life Joe Sterrett E-newsletters**

### **Strengthening Greek Life Update (5.3.04)**

The "Strengthening Greek Life Update" newsletter has been published regularly since June 2003 to keep Lehigh's campus community informed of efforts to strengthen Greek life. The Task Force submitted its report in February, at which time an implementation planning phase began at the charge of Lehigh's Board of Trustees. This issue of the newsletter will cover progress being made as part of the implementation planning process and other topics of interest to Lehigh's Greek community. Complete information on the Strengthening Greek Life initiative can be found at: [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife).

### **Message from Provost Yoshida**

Dear Lehigh Community Members:

For over two years, we have continually engaged students, alumni, faculty and staff in our efforts to strengthen Lehigh's Greek system. This approach - one that considers multiple perspectives - is the best way to produce a plan that can address the broad needs of our current community members as well as those of generations of students yet to tread on South Mountain.

Following distribution of the Greek Life Task Force Report in February, teams of committed individuals have been working hard and are making strong progress toward developing a comprehensive implementation plan for presentation to Trustees in June. It is important to note that significant progress has already been made toward a number of the report recommendations and I encourage you to review this progress by visiting [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/ippupdate.asp](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/ippupdate.asp).

Three working groups are focused on critical areas - Vision, Chapter Continuity and Recognition, and Housing - and are assessing the relevant portions of the more than 40 Task Force recommendations. These work groups have made tremendous progress in developing implementation plans, and I commend and thank each group member who has given the time and energy needed to make this effort successful.

While some of the task force recommendations can be implemented fairly quickly (i.e. hiring of Greek Life Coordinators and the creation of a Greek life vision statement), others require careful thought and planning (development of life skills education program, considering 1st and 2nd year student housing) and as a result will take longer to develop.

Throughout this collaborative process, several basic premises continue to guide our work:

A strong and healthy Greek system is an asset to Lehigh.

The recommendations of the Greek Life Task Force should be viewed and embraced in context of a whole plan -- not piecemeal. Most of the recommendations build off each other and are complementary toward achieving an improved student life experience and an enhanced living learning environment at Lehigh.

Our end goal is to ensure a positive educational and living experience that provides a robust learning environment, safe and comfortable accommodations, and a healthy and thriving social life.

Success will be achieved only through the individual and collective commitment and efforts of the entire Lehigh community.

As many of the Task Force recommendations move into implementation, we will continue to support the Greek system and individual chapters. However, we also expect chapters to fully live up to their ideals of scholarship, friendship, service and leadership. Lehigh remains committed to excellence in both the academic and personal development of our students. This project will help us achieve those goals.

Provost Ron Yoshida

### **Progress Update - Implementation Planning Process (5.3.04)**

Progress has been made on virtually all Greek Life Task Force recommendations, with many highlights including:

#### **Vision**

- A draft version of "A Vision for Greek Life at Lehigh" has been developed by a group of 17 students, alumni, faculty and staff members. The statement has been posted to the Strengthening Greek Life web site in an effort to engage the community and solicit feedback. Statement to be finalized and shared with the Greek community by the summer.
- Vision Committee Members: Chris Marshall '88-Committee Co-Chair, Alumni Association; Meredith Mickel-Committee Co-Chair, Fraternity and Sorority Affairs Staff; Jeff Boujoukos '89-Pi Kappa Alpha; Kathy Duggan Trimble '87-Kappa Alpha Theta; Derek Bowen '06-Chi Phi; Michael Dick '05-IFC President-Sigma Chi; Maddy Eadline-Student Affairs staff; Megan Hamilton '05-Panhel President-Delta Gamma; Linda Hendrixson '06-Student-Athlete; Sue Hofmann-University Relations staff; Becky Jonisch '06-Alpha Phi; Rick Longenecker '05-Student Senator; Greg McNeal '99-Sigma Chi; Chris Sands '05-Chi Phi; Michelle Sushner '04-Alpha Chi Omega; Rich Titus '81, Faculty-College of Business and Economics; George White, Faculty-College of Education.
- Next step calls for each chapter to develop its own vision statement by Jan. '05.

#### **Governance**

- Recruitment for four Greek Life Coordinators is underway, with the goal of a July 1 start date.
- IFC and Panhel approved shifting the officer election and service cycle to the academic year. The transition planning process which involved chapter leadership working with staff from the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs and Student Affairs has been completed. Implementation will commence in the Fall '04 semester.

- The second semester rush process has been created and will be implemented for the '04-'05 academic year. Fraternity rush will be held the first month of the spring semester, with the six-week new member education beginning immediately after bid signing. Sorority rush will remain on current schedules due to the detail and national rules governing their process.
- Work is underway on the development of a curriculum in life skills and leadership services. A working group is conducting a preliminary assessment of skills, competencies, and characteristics considered essential for our students to be successful and productive citizens and professionals. The group is conducting an environmental scan at Lehigh to identify what the essential skills are or should be, assessing what is currently being done to develop these skills in our students, and identifying what methods should be used to track students' development in identified skill areas. The group is seeking to determine if there is overlap among any of the colleges, student affairs, and other campus departments in this area of student development, to subsequently make recommendations to the Provost as to what makes the best sense for Lehigh to move forward in this area. The Life Skills Working group members include: Michelle Samuels, Associate Dean of Student Development, facilitator; Joan DeSalvatore, Associate Dean (CBE); Rick Weisman, Associate Dean (RCEAS); Linda Lowe-Krentz, Associate Dean (CAS); Stacy Stainbrook, Assistant to the Provost; and Carolyn Shemwell, Manager of Special Projects (Office of the Provost).
- A group comprised of students, alumni and staff has been working to develop a comprehensive continuity and chapter recognition policy. Areas of focus include the conditions under which fraternities and sororities can gain recognition and/or housing as Lehigh chapters, and the circumstances and consequences associated with chapters that lose housing and/or recognition. Committee members include: Sharon Basso, Dean of Students, co-chair; David Joseph, Director, Residential Services, (co-chair); Peter Bianco '05, IFC; Ozzie Breiner, Assoc. Director, Residential Services (ad hoc member); Pat Chase, Director, Facilities Planning and Renovations; Tom Dubreuil, Associate Dean of Students; Rosalia Italiano '05, Student Senate; Courtney Junkin '05, Panhel; Ted LaGuerre '64; Chris Marshall, Executive Director, Alumni Association; Jean McGill '83; Susan Mead, Asst. Dean, Residence Life; Chris Mulvihill, Asst. Dean, Student Conduct; Jon Trenkle '02.

### **Housing/Residential Experience**

- A working group with student, alumni and staff representation is currently working on a statement describing the landlord/lessee relationship. The statement is due by the end of May '04. Members of the working group include: David Joseph, Director, Residential Services; Susan Mead, Assistant Dean of Students; Warren Loller, Assistant Director of Budget; Gary Falasca, Director, Facility Services; Betty Fisher, Director, FMA; Michael Lieberman '75; and Michael Dick '05, IFC President.
- Peggy Plympton, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and her staff are working closely with Student Affairs staff to develop financial models for Greek housing improvements. The models should be completed by the end of May '04.
- Work is continuing on developing a plan to address sorority housing equity.
- Effective in the '05-'06 academic year, chapters will be required to meet 90% occupancy in order to preserve the privilege of leasing a chapter house. Failure to meet this

requirement for three semesters in a row (or four out of five consecutive semesters) will result in loss of lease privilege. This standard will also apply to affiliated living groups in other campus housing.

- Discussions are currently underway on the recommendation that all first and second year students live on campus. Implementation issues are being considered by a group comprised of the following individuals: Sharon Basso, Dean of Students; Tony Corallo, Associate Vice President, Facilities Planning and Renovation; David Joseph, Director, Residential Services; Eric Kaplan, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid; John Smeaton, Vice Provost, Student Affairs.

### **Social Life**

- Staff from Student Affairs and Facilities Services, along with Student Senate members, are working on a program for both short and long term solutions.

### **Communications**

- Creation of alumni communications vehicles is well under way to enhance communications efforts between Greek alumni and the university. The Greek Life website was created and linked from the Alumni homepage. An alumni notification policy was established in March to notify key constituent groups in the event a chapter is not meeting performance standards. The initial "Greek Speak" column was created by the GAC and published in Fall '03 . A communications position was created for the IFC, Panhel and GAC. The process is under way to identify a point person from each Alumni House Corporation.
- Greek Life Coordinators and the Communications Officers from each chapter house will work over Summer '04 to enhance the Chapter "Bulletin Board" and make it the priority area to display important communications.
- Data collection is underway from both the university and chapters to create the first Greek annual report. The report will serve as a document of record for the state of the Greek system that summarizes recent Greek accomplishments, relevant system and all house-specific data, and areas that need improvement. The report will be published in Summer '04 and made available to the community.

### **Greek Accreditation**

- The new Greek Accreditation system is an in-depth multifaceted process that evaluates a chapter's performance by examining the broad areas of scholarship, leadership, citizenship, partnership and stewardship. The new process, which replaces the Greek Review, will be piloted during May with two fraternities and two sororities and implemented for the '04-'05 academic year. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs will create a condensed handout highlighting the process to provide students and alumni with a clearer understanding of what it entails. Look for it in the coming months as a link in this newsletter and on the Strengthening Greek Life web site.
- John Smeaton, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, will convene a committee made up of students, alumni and staff in the Fall '04 to develop a process to conduct an annual assessment of the health of the Greek System. A formal and periodic assessment is important to measure progress towards realizing the vision for Greek Life as well as to identify emerging needs and opportunities for strengthening Lehigh's Greek system.

## **A Greek Alum Shares His Thoughts**

Change will keep Greeks alive

By Greg McNeal

Letter to the Editor

4/25/2004

I continue to read with disappointment the letters from ill-informed alumni and students regarding Greek Life at Lehigh. Just a few months ago, the university released the preliminary details of a plan to dedicate significant resources to strengthen Lehigh's Greek system.

The multi-million dollar investment was prompted by the detailed recommendations of a Task Force comprised of students, alumni, faculty and staff. I have served on this Task Force and dedicated countless hours of my time to making sure the plan is the right one for Lehigh. When I look at the names of the individuals who were involved in the Task Force, many of whom dedicated much more time than I have, I am confident that we have made the right decisions. Every constituent group who wanted representation was part of the process and included hundreds of students, the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, chapters who lost their house or recognition, Greek Alumni Council members, non-Greek students, administration, staff and faculty members.

While great news for Greek students and alumni, the recommended changes come with serious expectations for a change in the climate on campus. Bear in mind, the stakes are equally high for Lehigh — their investment bucks a trend on other campuses throughout the nation — many of whom are shying away from supporting their Greek systems by cutting back instead of investing.

Lehigh has decided to make South Mountain's Greek system a model for other universities to follow. The plan is to embrace the positive aspects of Greek life by charging these organizations to live up to their values. Old notions of what it means to be Greek at Lehigh will give way to new higher expectations. The stereotypical notion of beer-laden "frat houses" will become a part of the past for Lehigh Greeks to exist in the future. Commitment to values such as integrity, brotherhood, leadership, scholarship, life-long learning, community service, and respect for others will be the hallmark of a Lehigh Greek experience. These are not hollow expectations; the university will mandate such a commitment through an evaluation process based on standards embodied in chapter and community values.

The commitment is evident across the entire spectrum of student life. As part of the plan, Lehigh is providing the financial, physical plant, and staff resources necessary for success. Students will have a better chance than they have ever had in the past due to Lehigh's decision to take responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of Greek living accommodations. This is a significant financial commitment almost exclusively seen on Midwest campuses and is rare amongst Northeast institutions. Lehigh students and alumni should be proud of the university's commitment and the Task Force's efforts.

Lehigh's investment will also alter the way the university mentors Greek students. Thirty-three percent of the university's undergraduate males are fraternity members, and 43 percent of undergraduate females belong to sororities.

In the past, just two full-time professionals struggled to mentor more than 1,700 Greek students — an insurmountable task that was in stark contrast to the number of full time professionals, resident directors and Gryphons dedicated to keeping the residence hall system strong. Through Lehigh's new commitment to Greek students, the staff will increase to six, adding four new full-time professionals who will mentor small groups of fraternity and sorority members.

Non-Greek members of Lehigh's community will also benefit from these changes. Some expected improvements in student life include the opening of an on-campus late night diner to serve as an alternative social venue and the implementation of mandatory on-campus living during a student's sophomore year. But perhaps most notably, Lehigh will add a life skills and leadership development program to the required curriculum. These types of changes are exactly what Lehigh needs to build a sense of community on campus while continuing to prepare Greek and non-Greek students for life after Lehigh. Noticeably absent from the Task Force's recommendations are "social policy" recommendations. The belief of the Task Force is that fostering responsibility among chapter members and providing them with the leadership tools and mentorship for success is more likely to engender responsible behavior than developing a set of rules.

Future students will also benefit from responsible Greek students who help counter Lehigh's long outdated reputation as a "party school." Indeed, admissions officials, when posed with questions about the prominence of Greeks on Lehigh's campus, will be able to proudly respond that the Greek system complements and enriches student life and learning on campus for both members and non-members. Few institutions can make such a claim.

Despite these developments, rosy predictions for the future of Greek Life on campus are not pre-ordained. Success in this process will require the continued attention and dedication of students and alumni if Lehigh's Greek system expects to survive. The first step in that process will require students and alumni to buy in. The Task Force plan represents a bold new course for Lehigh. The university has dedicated millions of dollars and countless hours to seeing this process succeed. Chapters who want to be successful must rally the support of their members and alumni, and enthusiastically implement the recommendations. Those chapters who don't realize that this is a great opportunity for them and refuse to change, may properly find themselves part of Lehigh's history.

### **Speak Up!! Be Part of the Vision of Greek Life at Lehigh**

A committed group of 17 students, alumni and staff members worked tirelessly this semester to develop a compelling vision statement for Greek life at Lehigh.

#### A Vision for Greek Life at Lehigh University

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The Greek Life community at Lehigh University strives to develop strong men and women who flourish in a system of loyalty, legacy and shared experiences. The spirit of brotherhood and

sisterhood is enduring, whereby the Greek community embraces common bonds between individuals, chapters, and a national program of ritual and tradition. The Greek community lives by a common set of values - pursuing personal and organizational excellence, providing service to the University and greater Bethlehem communities, and building an inclusive environment.

The Greek community will uphold these common values and promotes the University's educational mission by:

Creating a sense of camaraderie, unity, and pride amongst the Greek community and the entire student body

Providing a forum where individuals pursue academic success, develop leadership skills, and build foundations for life-long learning

Fostering a safe, social environment that encourages responsibility

Upholding an atmosphere of mutual respect among the Greek community, University administration, faculty, and staff whereby all parties work together to demonstrate accountability and trust

Embodying a diversity-enriched environment where various experiences, backgrounds, and opportunities elicit personal and University-wide growth

Developing an active network between Greek alumni and Greek collegians

Honoring and respecting the positive Greek Life traditions of the past while creating and developing new traditions to ensure continuous success

Living these common values will create an environment where each individual contributes to the legacy that is Greek Life at Lehigh

### **Strengthening Greek Life Update (2.17.04)**

To keep Lehigh's campus community informed of Task Force progress and efforts to strengthen Greek life this "Strengthening Greek Life Update" newsletter has been published regularly since June 2003. Although the Task Force charge has been fulfilled and the report submitted, you will continue to receive regular updates on progress being made during the implementation planning phase. Information will continue to be posted to the Strengthening Greek Life website: [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife) and the most commonly asked questions will be updated regularly on the site's Frequently Asked Questions section at: [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/faqs.asp](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/faqs.asp).

### **Message from President Farrington (2.17.04)**

After months of hard work, the Greek Life Task Force recommendations on strengthening Greek life at Lehigh were presented to the trustees, who endorsed the principles and goals reflected in the report. In doing so, they directed the university's administration to study and assess the recommendations in the report and submit for their review and approval an implementation plan at the June board meeting.

The board asked that in developing the plan we carefully evaluate the required resources, potential impact on academic and student life, observations of the Task Force, feedback from trustees, and long-term planning considerations. Provost Ron Yoshida will lead the effort to develop the implementation plan.

The report itself contains a transformative vision for what Greek and student life can-and should-be at Lehigh. You can read the entire report on-line at [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/taskforcereport.asp](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/taskforcereport.asp) as well as review key points from the approved board resolution at [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/highlights.asp](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/highlights.asp). The Task Force report is posted in its entirety on the Strengthening Greek Life Web site at [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife) for open viewing, and a series of campus meetings are underway to discuss the implementation planning process.

Although the task force was created to address Greek life, its report emphasizes that Greek life should be a fully integrated part of general student life at Lehigh. The board concurred and agreed that through these efforts Lehigh has the opportunity to elevate all aspects of student life.

The focus of the report is on raising standards, requiring greater maturity and responsibility, providing enhanced institutional support, and ensuring clear accountability for results. Responsibility in addressing these challenges lies with the university, alumni and students.

It is important to note that the implementation will move ahead wherever possible even while the more detailed long-range planning is underway. Some of the recommendations are already a reality, while others represent multi-year efforts. One thing you can be sure of is that change is already underway.

I wish to thank Joe Sterrett, director of athletics, who did a superb job chairing and leading the task force, as well as each of the task force members who dedicated their time and talents to this exemplary effort.

I encourage everyone who cares about student life at Lehigh to take the time to review the report.

**Letter from Joe Sterrett, Task Force Chair (2.17.04)**

The final report of the Task Force on Strengthening Greek Life at Lehigh has been completed, submitted, and presented to the president and Board of Trustees. The full report can be viewed at [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/taskforcereport.asp](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/taskforcereport.asp)

Our committee is of one voice regarding our recommendations. We believe that as a package they will provide the best chance to strengthen our Greek system, while at the same time, improving the overall quality of campus life. Of course, the real challenge is in executing, evaluating, and sustaining the improvements we envision.

Our committee urges that the recommendations be assessed as a whole. To focus efforts on only one or two recommendations would diminish the impact of the package. Nearly every single recommendation has a relationship to the others, and there is a collective purpose to the entire

report. Often the development of a package of proposals ultimately reflects compromise. From my perspective, there was no "compromising" in these recommendations, but instead there was a realization that "the whole could be greater than the sum of the parts". We certainly hope that is the case.

Our report was well received by the campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. More work is needed on implementation details and timing, but it is very clear that the commitment to strengthening our system that was evident in the creation of our task force is very real, despite that it is still sometimes questioned. There will be an investment of time, energy and resources put into our Greek system and into the quality of campus life for all.

I need to express my personal gratitude to all the members of our task force for their incredible commitment of time, passion, and good sense to a process that required nearly a year to complete. It was a privilege to work with them, and I will always think fondly of the time we shared on this project. I also wish to thank the literally hundreds of alumni that offered advice, encouragement, and time as participants in our various discussions and work groups. If the energy and talents of our alumni, students, and staff can be collectively harnessed and directed, our system will be truly distinctive and a model for others. This can happen!

So on to the work at hand!

### **Board Resolution**

#### **Highlights from resolution passed by Lehigh Board of Trustees on February 6, 2004**

- The Board of Trustees, at its February 6, 2004 meeting, dedicated considerable attention to reviewing and discussing the Report of the Task Force on Strengthening Greek Life (the "Task Force"), a group that was established at the Board's direction in Spring 2003 to design approaches for improving and sustaining the vitality of Lehigh's Greek community and achieving high standards in it;
- The Board of Trustees expresses the Board's and the University's sincere appreciation to the members of the Task Force for the generous commitment of their time, talents, reflection, and creativity and their dedication to Lehigh and the best interests of its students, campus, and alumni community;
- The Board of Trustees also expresses the Board's and the University's sincere appreciation to Joseph Sterrett, Executive Director of Athletics and Chair of the Task Force, for his personal commitment, efforts, and outstanding leadership of the Task Force;
- The Board of Trustees commends and endorses the process through which the Task Force engaged and consulted with members of the Lehigh campus and alumni community, an inclusive process which was reflected in the quality of the Task Force's Report and which also exhibited the strengths of the Lehigh community;
- The Board of Trustees recognizes the Report and Recommendations of the Task Force as a blueprint to help guide future actions designed to strengthen both Greek life and student life at

Lehigh, to achieve high standards in the student community, and to pursue the full integration of learning experiences into all aspects of students' academic and residential life at Lehigh; and

- The Board of Trustees also recognizes that final review and consideration of implementation of the Recommendations of the Task Force require careful evaluation of necessary resources (financial, staffing, and facilities), the evaluation of potential impacts on academic and student life, the weighing of observations and challenges noted by the Task Force, and the attention to relevant long-term planning considerations, all of which will be elements of an effective and responsible implementation plan;
- Effective as of February 6, 2004, the Board of Trustees endorses the processes, principles and goals reflected in the Report and Recommendations of the Task Force, as well as the spirit in which they were authored to have a positive impact on the daily lives of all students, preparing them to be productive community members at Lehigh and beyond, and to assume leadership roles in student organizations and society;
- The Board of Trustees requests the University administration to study and assess the Recommendations in the Report of the Task Force, with due consideration of the directions and viewpoints expressed by the Board at its February 6, 2004 meeting, and further requests the University administration to prepare and submit to the Board by June 4, 2004, a proposed implementation plan comprised of specific actions to further the goals and principles articulated in the Report, as well as those identified by the Board of Trustees.

\*Note: To read the actual Board Resolution visit the Strengthening Greek Life website at [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife).

### **Strengthening Greek Life Update (1.29.04)**

To keep Lehigh's campus community informed of efforts to strengthen Greek life, an email newsletter, "Strengthening Greek Life Update," is being published throughout the year. Please click on the link provided with each article to read the full text of the topics below. If you would like to get up to speed on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh, as well as future plans, check out the Strengthening Greek Life website:

[www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife)

### **Letter from Joe Sterrett, Greek Life Task Force Chair (1.29.04)**

With the submission of our final written report to the Office of the President, the work of the Task Force on Strengthening Greek Life is drawing to a close. However, all that we have done thus far is to prepare the field of play, to trim the grass, to lay down some lines, and to propose some strategies for playing the game. While there has been some warm-up activity, the real work has yet to begin.

We view this "game" as a championship game, except that there won't be another season to look to if we don't fare so well this time. The Greek system needs to become stronger NOW, and it needs the full participation and effort of the University, our Greek Alumni, and our undergraduate actives. Our Task Force holds the strong and unified belief that all parties are

truly ready to roll up their sleeves and get after the challenge, and we believe that the recommendations we have offered can provide some direction.

Those recommendations were provided to President Farrington, as was appropriate in the context of his charge to the Task Force upon formation. He intends to share them with the Board of Trustees and to devote a significant portion of their meeting time in early February to discussion of the report. Our Task Force has been invited to present our report at the Board meeting and we look forward to doing so. In the week following that meeting, the full report will be shared with the University community.

Our recommendations are the product of months of thought and comprehensive input and feedback received from students, alumni, and University staff. As such, any continued debate about the merits of specific recommendations would not be a productive use of energy. On the other hand, there is still much to be sorted out in terms of implementation strategies. In short, we will all need to come together to make the recommendations work for the Greek system.

Without compromising the integrity of our report or the reporting relationship of our Task Force to the President, I can share some of the fundamental themes of our final recommendations:

- (1) We have proposed clear roles and responsibilities in addressing the challenges of our Greek system for the University, for our Alumni, and for our students. We believe what we have proposed is achievable yet the standards are high.
- (2) We have defined areas where increased investment in the Greek system is needed, and in return, we have defined areas where improved performance by actives is essential.
- (3) We have proposed systems of evaluation and communication that are more open and disclosing than ever before. We all need to know how our chapters and our system are doing.
- (4) Our report is not primarily focused on social policies, or on increased regulation of any kind. The focus is on raising standards, expecting more maturity and responsibility, providing more institutional support, and ensuring that there is clear accountability for results.
- (5) We have proposed a commitment to leadership training, student development, and accountability that would benefit all students and all of student life, and that could be transformational for the Greek system.

Our recommendations were ultimately formulated as a “package” wherein each piece relates to all of the others. There are carefully considered reasons associated with every recommendation so it will be our hope that our audience will absorb the report as a whole and not bite-by-bite. As might be predictable, members of our Task Force did not agree on each specific element of our final report, however, the group has enthusiastically endorsed the collective set of recommendations and believes that our Greek system will be stronger if they are effectively implemented.

After we have had time to review and incorporate the Board response to the report, we will plan to hold a “Town Hall” type of forum for the Greek community to present our report, and we are planning to attend the Greek Alumni Council meeting in March. From the beginning of this process, our Task Force has been committed to an open dialogue and to forging stronger

collaboration among key campus constituencies. We intend to extend that commitment through the process of sharing the results of our labor.

### **Students Create Newsletter Highlighting Greek Life at Lehigh**

“Greek Columns” is a newsletter created by Greek students that focuses on the positive aspects of Greek Life at Lehigh. The need for a newsletter such as this was discussed at the Town Hall meeting last fall, and Blythe Beaubien, Alpha Chi Omega, worked hard through the end of the semester to launch the first issue. The “Greek Columns” newsletter will be published twice a semester and all Greek students are encouraged to contribute. To read the first issue, visit: <http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/greeknewsletter.pdf>

### **Strengthening Greek Life Process**

The Strengthening Greek Life Web site has been created to help keep members of the extended Lehigh family informed about Greek life at Lehigh today. Greek life at Lehigh has enjoyed a long history. We seek your help in our efforts to strengthen the Lehigh Greek system by sharing your comments, ideas and suggestions. Please e-mail your comments, ideas and suggestions to: [alumni@lehigh.edu](mailto:alumni@lehigh.edu)

### **Strengthening Greek Life Update (12.9.03)**

To keep Lehigh's campus community informed of efforts to strengthen Greek life, an email newsletter, "Strengthening Greek Life Update," is being published during the summer and fall. Please click on the link provided with each article to read the full text of the topics below. If you would like to get up to speed on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh, as well as future plans, check out the Strengthening Greek Life website: [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/)

### **Letter from Joe Sterrett, Greek Life Task Force Chair (12.9.03)**

Our task force has been meeting in both sub-groups and as a full task force on at least a weekly basis since the October 19th "Town Hall" meeting with students and alumni. Our work was aided considerably by the feedback received at that session, and in several of the areas in which we expect to make recommendations, the first drafts have been prepared and reviewed by the committee without controversy, and we have begun to share some of our conclusions with the campus staff that would need to implement or resource them for feedback.

Specifically, we feel very good about what is emerging from our "Vision for Greek Life" group, our "Social Role for the Greek System" group, our "Communications" group, and the work done to retool the "Greek Review Process" into a "Greek Accreditation" system. There are few questions about the importance of a Greek system that is educationally based, committed to managing social behavior with maturity and responsibility, and accepting of the need for accountability to the system, to alumni of the system, and to the university.

Our task force is still working through some options and questions surrounding the organizational structure of university support for the Greek system and we have yet to achieve the clarity we seek in defining meaningful and realistic roles for the Intrafraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, and Greek Alumni Council. We have, however, agreed that additional staff

to provide mentoring support in the Greek Life area will be valuable and necessary to achieving the vision we embrace.

There are also some unresolved challenges in the broad area of Greek housing, though we are spending lots of time researching and evaluating the potential impact of a number of possible recommendations. What is very clear is that clarity has been missing as regards to the relationship between the university/owner of nearly all our Greek houses, and the chapters that lease those spaces. Along with this need for clarity about the fundamental relationship needs to come clarity about the responsibilities that each party (University, Chapter alumni, and actives) must be willing to accept. Among the relevant issues are the delineation of responsibilities (and consequences for failing to meet those duties) for house deferred maintenance, general maintenance, and furnishings. We believe we are rapidly approaching a consensus, thanks to much input from the GAC.

Most critically, however, are the as yet unresolved questions about how to ensure that the changes we seek for the Greek system (as well as for overall student residential life) are going to create a distinctive and enduring system. The quality of life is not what it should be, the annual process of renewing the system with new members is uneven at best, and there is too much evidence of immature behavior to comfortably conclude that "Greek life as it has been" is without concern. Much debate continues within and beyond our task force on some of these questions, and until we are satisfied with a combination of recommendations that we feel will achieve that fundamental objective of a more distinctive and more enduring system, we cannot conclude our task force work. Our goal for a completed report by the semester break may not be possible because we need to be sure that all of the ramifications of our recommendations are fully understood, but I think we can be close to completed by December 20. I continue to appreciate and deeply value the contributions being made by Lehigh alumni and by our students. Their commitment has been extraordinary.

### **Recently On Campus Column**

- Lehigh's Greek organizations were busy during the fall 2003 semester, embracing philanthropic and community outreach opportunities with aplomb. Greeks took top honors in the annual Good Scholar election, a treasured Lehigh tradition that raises money for cancer research. Lehigh Greeks contributed to the overall effort that surpassed its \$30,000 goal by raising a whopping \$51,165 for cancer research. Theta Delta Chi has hosted the event for the past four years. This year's top three winners were: Heather Drobish, Phi Beta Phi, who raised \$8,109; Jacqueline Thompson, Delta Gamma, who raised \$5,822; and Adam Kornfield, Sigma Phi Epsilon, who raised \$4,432.

- Another well-received community outreach effort was the "Adopt-A Family" program. In cooperation with the department of athletics, Greek organizations "adopted" 23 needy families and provided holiday gifts ranging from toys and dolls to beds and grooming items. The Greeks celebrated with their families on Wednesday, Dec. 3.

- Additional philanthropic efforts undertaken by Lehigh Greeks this semester included: The sisters of Alpha Omicron Pi and the brothers of Sigma Chi raised nearly \$3,000 for the Children's Miracle Network and the American Juvenile Arthritis Organization; the men and

women of Sigma Chi and AOPi see-sawed for a good cause for 50 hours straight; and the sisters of Kappa Alpha Theta and Alpha Gamma Delta participated in the second annual Spooktacular event, an event organized by Lehigh's Community Service office, that hosts 90 South Side children in October.

- Prior to the life safety guidelines going into effect on Nov. 3, chapter leaders, along with staff members from residential services, facility services and fraternity and sorority affairs, walked through houses to help identify potential life safety violations. Since the official Nov. 3 launch of the house visit program, two corporate (i.e. chapter) offenses have occurred.
- On Nov. 19, a mattress was found blocking the exit of the first floor of the Chi Phi house. As a result, the chapter was fined \$500 and earned one life safety violation "strike" against the chapter house.
- During a regularly scheduled inspection on Nov. 25, a plastic cup covering a smoke detector in the first floor hallway of Theta Xi fraternity caused the chapter to be fined \$500 and earn a life safety violation strike against the chapter house.
- As part of the on-going education process, anytime an organization incurs a violation, all undergraduates, their parents, and their alumni leaders are notified of said violations.

#### **Overheard on Campus....**

"Under Roseann Corsi's initiative, many fraternities and sororities hosted a number of local families at a Christmas festival at Zoellner. I chose to look in as I was leaving Zoellner for the evening. I was utterly delighted and touched to have the privilege of watching the students' efforts come to fruition: the space was attentively decorated, the event was well organized and tidy, the snacks appropriate, and the Lehigh students were generous with both their money which purchased the gifts and their interaction with the families."

Liz Scofield  
Director, Zoellner

#### **In The Next Issue**

Keep an eye out in the next Strengthening Greek Life E-Newsletter for a link to "Greek Columns", a newsletter created by Greek students that focuses on the positive aspects of Greek Life at Lehigh. The "Greek Columns" newsletter will be published twice a semester and all Greek students are encouraged to contribute.

#### **Strengthening Greek Life Update (10.27.03)**

To keep Lehigh's campus community informed of efforts to strengthen Greek life, an email newsletter, "Strengthening Greek Life Update," is being published during the summer and fall. Please click on the link provided with each article to read the full text of the topics below. If you would like to get up to speed on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh, as well as future plans, check out the Strengthening Greek Life website:

[www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/)

#### **Letter from Joe Sterrett, Greek Life Task Force Chair (10.27.03)**

The start of the academic year has brought an accelerated pace to the work of the Greek Life Task Force. On August 20, before most students had formally returned to campus, the Task Force participated in the annual Greek Leadership Retreat held at the Mountaintop Campus. In addition to Greek organization presidents, the retreat included a number of underclass students to ensure that longer range planning for Greek life and Greek leadership was not forgotten.

Although some of the student leaders felt the time invested in assessing the current challenges confronting Greek leadership was a repeat of prior experiences, the members of the Greek Life Task Force in attendance gained an invaluable exposure to the students' perceptions. At the end of the day, students volunteered to participate in some work groups that are looking at possible modifications to the Greek review system, a fall term plan for house inspections, and improving communications among Greek actives, alumni, and the university.

Subsequently, the Task Force met to define a specific outline and plan for our work this fall. Using the common themes that have emerged from the reports and recommendations we have received, Task Force members have been assigned to begin summarizing those recommendations and the resulting questions. Additionally, Task Force members have been assigned to campus "work groups" (composed of students, alumni, and administrative staff) that are focused on developing specific information, and in some cases specific recommendations, for the Task Force.

An example of one of these groups is the work group on "housing" that is defining the existing relationships between the university and our Greek organizations, including the financial implications of occupancy numbers, maintenance, and rent.

Our final "constituency meeting" took place on Sat., Sept. 13 when we met with the Greek Alumni Council Executive Board. Following this session, our group turned attention to the identification of priorities and the compilation of viable options. We presented our still very preliminary findings to an invited group of students, alumni, and staff on Sunday, October 19, in order to receive face-to-face feedback.

It is clear to me that students, staff, and alumni remain committed to a stronger Greek system and that there are important areas of Greek life about which there is very little disagreement. The areas of discourse are not surprising, but they are also not without solutions. We look forward to the challenge of proposing solutions that will serve well the future of Greek life at Lehigh.

### **Feb 5-6 Presentation to Board of Trustees Task Force Revised Action Plan**

Following the Greek leadership retreat in August and a Task Force meeting in early September, the Greek Life Task Force announced modifications to the tentative plans for its work that had been outlined early in the summer.

Of specific importance was the decision to cancel an off campus "Greek Summit" that had been tentatively scheduled for the weekend of October 4-5. The Task Force agreed that holding a smaller scale gathering over some part of a weekend day in mid-October would better serve the needs of the group. This session, held on Sunday, October 19th, included students, alumni, and

campus staff. The Task Force presented preliminary recommendations and/or unresolved questions associated with possible recommendations for feedback. These “feedback sessions” were conducted in smaller groups of diversified constituents to promote active discussion.

The current Task Force work schedule looks like this:

Ongoing work Attendance at campus “work group” meetings aimed at collecting current information required by Task Force, and at developing certain recommendations

**September 13:** Meeting with Greek Alumni Council Executive Board

**September 14-October 3:** Preparation of preliminary recommendations by key areas along with key questions to be addressed and resolved before final report is completed

**October 19:** Task Force Feedback Summit: a half-day dialogue with a diversified group of students, alumni, and staff regarding the early thoughts and questions of the Task Force

**Early November:** Preliminary drafts of sections of Task Force report shared with key constituents (student leaders, Greek alumni leaders, campus leaders) for feedback

**Thanksgiving:** Preliminary draft of final report completed

**Early December:** Preliminary draft of final report shared with key constituents for feedback

**Mid-December:** Revisions to final report

**End-December:** Report finalized and submitted to President Farrington

### **Life Safety Standards Articulated and Shared with Greek Community**

Earlier this fall, a subgroup of the Greek Life Task Force comprised of students, alumni and staff was asked to analyze life safety issues found in Greek houses and develop an action plan to address them. The group worked to articulate life safety standards for Greek housing and identify resulting consequences for chapters that do not meet those standards.

### **Greek Housing Life Safety Evaluation Criteria**

#### **Fire and Electrical Safety**

Fire safety and electrical safety are obviously of critical importance. As tragic incidents at other universities have demonstrated, they can literally be matters of life or death. The occupants and visitors in each Greek house are among the most important contributors to achieving and maintaining safe conditions. Each Greek chapter must take major responsibility for maintaining safe living conditions in their residence. Actions that jeopardize safety cannot and will not be tolerated.

#### **Fire Safety**

At a minimum, each Greek house is equipped with smoke detectors, pull stations, fire alarms, kitchen hood suppression systems and fire extinguishers. All such systems must remain in full

functioning condition at all times, in order to ensure the safety of occupants and guests. Full sprinkler system coverage is also present in approximately two-thirds of Lehigh's Greek housing facilities at this time. Installation of sprinklers in the remaining houses should be completed by 2005. Fire alarm signals are transmitted from each facility via phone line to a common receiver located in the Campus Police office. The Campus Police then notify (via radio or phone) the Bethlehem Fire Department, which immediately responds. To insure the integrity of the fire safety systems in each facility, it will be considered a violation of essential safety practice when any of the following occur.

### **Major Fire Safety Hazards/Violations (Category I)**

- Smoke detection and suppression equipment is deliberately removed or disabled, preventing its proper function.
- Any component of the fire alarm system is deliberately disabled.
- Exit signs or emergency light fixtures are deliberately disabled.
- Stairwells, exits and hallways are deliberately blocked by furniture and/or trash.

### **Secondary Fire Safety Hazards/Violations (Category II)**

- Fire extinguishers are activated and discharged under any circumstances other than to extinguish an actual fire.
- All house occupants/visitors fail to exit the facility promptly when an alarm is signaled.
- False alarms are caused by activation of pull stations or the intentional activation of alarm systems.
- False alarms or activation of hood suppression systems are caused by irresponsible cooking practices, e.g. leaving cooking food unattended for an extended period of time.
- Any violation of the University's policy prohibiting smoking or burning (e.g. candles) in the facility.
- Vehicles are illegally parked in designated fire lanes, blocking access for emergency vehicles.
- Stairwell fire doors are propped open.
- Smoke detection and suppression equipment is removed or disabled, preventing its proper function.(1)
- Any component of the fire alarm system is disabled.(1)
- Exit signs or emergency light fixtures are disabled.(1)

(1) Accidental damage does occur on occasion. However, it is essential that accidental damage be reported promptly to University maintenance personnel by proper procedures so that it can be fixed.

### **Electrical Safety**

Unsafe electrical connections, e.g. too many devices connected to one outlet, amateur wiring, frayed wiring, overloaded circuits, and so forth, are among the most common causes of residential fires. They also are electrical shock hazards. To ensure the integrity of the electrical system in each facility, students in Greek houses must work to maintain safe electrical usage. It is a violation of essential safety practice when any of the following occur.

### **Major Electrical Safety Hazards/Violations (Category I)**

- A main or sub-distribution panel is tampered with by anyone other than a Lehigh maintenance technician or other personnel authorized by the University.
- Wiring installations are made by anyone other than a University-designated professional.

**Secondary Electrical Safety Hazards/Violations (Category II)**

- Any electrical outlet, switch or lighting fixture is deliberately damaged, disabled or otherwise altered, interfering with its normal function.
- Multiple electrical devices are connected to one electric outlet in a hazardous manner.
- Non-UL approved electrical devices are connected in any way to the electrical system.

**Fire Code Violation Sanctions**

**Fall 2003**

**Group (Common Area)\***

	<b>First Offense</b>	<b>Second Offense</b>	<b>Third Offense</b>	<b>Fourth Offense</b>
<b>Major (I)</b>	<b>\$500 Fine</b>	<b>\$1000 Fine</b>	<b>Loss of Right to University Housing for one academic year**</b>	
	<b>Disciplinary Warning</b>	<b>Disciplinary Probation</b>		
		<b>Restriction on Social Events as determined by the Dean of Students</b>		
Secondary (II)	\$300 Fine	\$300 Fine	\$500 fine	\$750 fine
		\$25 per member	\$50 per member	\$50 per member
	Disciplinary Warning	Disciplinary Warning	Disciplinary Probation	Disciplinary Probation

	<b>First Offense</b>	<b>Second Offense</b>	<b>Third Offense</b>	<b>Fourth Offense</b>
<b>Major (I)</b>	<b>\$500 Fine</b>	<b>\$1000 Fine</b>	<b>Removal from University Housing</b>	
	<b>Disciplinary Warning</b>	<b>Disciplinary Probation</b>		
Secondary (II)	\$300 Fine	\$300 Fine	\$500 fine	\$750 fine
	Disciplinary Warning	Disciplinary Warning	Disciplinary Probation	Disciplinary Probation

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**NOTES:**

Fines will be assessed for each violation (i.e. each covered smoke detector); other sanctions will apply per incident.

In cases of secondary violations that result from accidents and are promptly reported, fines, warnings and probations will not be assessed, unless it is apparent that the damage is not truly accidental.

\*Education of all residential and non-residential members, parents, and alumni will occur upon the adoption of this new policy.

After the First Group Offense, additional education and notification will again be presented to all parties.

After the Second Group Offense, a final warning letter/notice will be issued to all residents and non-residential members, parents, and alumni stating that any further violations will result in loss of housing.

\*\*Has been referred to the Task Force.

**Alumni Input Appreciated**

Response to previous Greek email newsletters has been fairly extensive, and much thoughtful advice has been received. The Task Force wishes to express appreciation to the following for very thoughtful submissions: P. Aarne Vesilind '62 - Chi Phi, Greg McNeal '99 - Sigma Chi, Toms Royal '61 - Chi Psi, Pete Gakos '52, Alan Fleming '71 - Delta Phi, Ed Swanson '61 - Alpha Chi Rho, Bob Fioretti '84 - Alpha Tau Omega, Greg Borsinger '76 - Phi Gamma Delta, Jim Golle '78 - Pi Kappa Alpha, Mike Tischbein '82 - Sigma Nu, John McAusland '88 - Delta Chi, Randall Johns '77 - Kappa Alpha, Joe King '61 - Sigma Chi.

**Strengthening Greek Life Update (7.30.03)**

To keep Lehigh's campus community informed of efforts to strengthen Greek life, an email newsletter, "Strengthening Greek Life Update," is being published during the summer and fall. Please click on the link provided with each article to read the full text of the topics below. If you would like to get up to speed on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh, as well as future plans, check out the Strengthening Greek Life website: [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/)

**Letter from Joe Sterrett, Chair of the Task Force for Strengthening Greek Life (7.30.03)**

The last several weeks have been affirming with regard to two important elements of the challenges we all face in restoring Greek life as a valued and valuable educational medium on the Lehigh campus. The first is that people do care about the future of Greek life and there are many whose passions have been translated into thoughtfully prepared recommendations that will be useful to our task force. The second is that “partnering” is possible even when there is a little bit (or more!) of a trust barrier to overcome.

I have received dozens of messages, letters, and suggestions from a wide range of alumni (Greek and non-Greek). For each of these I am grateful. It really helps to confirm that our alumni care about both our past and about our present and future. Caring is the first and perhaps the most critical step in building a stronger system, so it is meaningful to know that lots of people care, as evidenced by the more than 60 years of Lehigh experiences referenced in the many thoughtful communications I've received.

In addition to input from alumni, I also received some important information from the Lehigh Board of Trustees as a follow up to their June 6 meeting. The Board passed a resolution and sent it with a letter to President Farrington, the task force members and myself that articulated their position on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh. In the letter, the Board voiced its strong support of the task force and the current initiative to strengthen Greek life at Lehigh, but also expressed very strong concerns about the present system. Both the resolution and the letter follow in this newsletter, and I would encourage all those who care about this issue to read them. The task force is reviewing those documents and will discuss them at the next formal meeting.

The partnering effort will be important from the earliest stages of assessment to the ongoing efforts to implement and monitor a plan for enriching Greek life. The critical partnerships will include our students, our alumni, and our campus community. I've been encouraged by the leadership and attention paid to this initiative by our board leaders. I've been pleased to see the collaboration and cooperation that has occurred this summer relative to cleaning and safety initiatives in some Greek houses, and I've been inspired by the willingness of our students to set aside their anxieties about trusting the motives of "the administration" in order to help our task force plan some fall gatherings that will be productive. I am more convinced than ever that our students CAN make our system work in the way that everyone would like to see it work, and I have never doubted that there are alumni and university staff willing to support our student efforts.

As August arrives and we move into a more active stage of our work, I offer a few personal observations about the challenges each of our key constituent groups will need to confront. Our students will need to work harder at understanding and caring more about the core values of the Greek system, many of which were foundational for the experiences of our Greek alumni, and most of which are still presumed by alumni to be honored by current Greek members. Our alumni will need to work hard to understand the present challenges for the Greek system (which means understanding how students today assess their residential, social, and educational priorities), and in so doing they can help us shape a more meaningful future. And our campus community will need to listen carefully to what our students and alumni are saying, while ensuring that there is also absolute clarity about what our students and alumni are doing. In my world, game plans are not worth the paper on which they are drawn up if we do not execute (behave) as we intend and as we expect.

I look forward to the next stage of our work!

### **Update on task force summer initiatives (07.30.03)**

Although the Greek Life Task Force was not able to meet as a full group during the month of July, members of the group were actively engaged in communicating about Greek life issues, and

in promoting some planning for the fall term. In order to be ready for the return of students in the fall, much work has continued this summer, as described below.

Among the activity over the past several weeks:

- Joe Sterrett, chair of the task force, has been working with Peggy Plympton, vice president for finance and administration. She communicated with the alumni house corporation presidents from six of our Greek organizations about existing (or persisting) safety and/or unsanitary housing conditions. Staff members from campus facilities, residential services and student affairs were involved in the communication follow-up efforts. Opportunities to tour and evaluate house conditions of concern were offered and in some cases accepted. Strategies for resolving the conditions were agreed upon with five of the houses, and discussions continue with the house that presented the most significant health and safety issues. The cooperation between these alumni house corporation officers and the university leadership has been quite healthy. Task force members have been involved in the communication loop and have been invited to offer perspectives about the proposed solutions.
- Six task force members, including three students, gathered for a dinner meeting in New Jersey to discuss options and priorities for both the customary “Greek leadership retreat” in August, and a tentative “Greek Summit” in October. Student involvement and enthusiasm for these initiatives is essential and our task force representatives are optimistic about the possibilities.
- An early fall gathering of our Greek Alumni Council is tentatively planned for the morning of September 13. Task Force members will be involved in the meeting.
- Task force members all received and are absorbing the report submitted by Colgate University’s committee on residential and student life. There are some very interesting recommendations presented to the Colgate campus, and we need to be aware of what others are doing as we define our Lehigh pathway. That report can be viewed on line at the Colgate.edu website or through this link <http://www.colgate.edu/residentiallife/>
- The Lehigh Board of Trustees passed a resolution that articulated their position on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh. Jim Tanenbaum, chair of Lehigh’s Board of Trustees, sent the resolution with a letter he drafted to President Farrington that voiced the Board’s continued support of the task force and the current initiative to strengthen Greek life at Lehigh, but also expressed strong concerns about the present system. The task force is reviewing those documents and will discuss them at the next formal meeting.

### **Strengthening Greek Life Update (6.30.03)**

To keep Lehigh's campus community informed of efforts to strengthen Greek life, an email newsletter, "Strengthening Greek Life Update," is being published during the summer and fall. Please click on the link provided with each article to read the full text of the topics below. If you would like to get up to speed on the current state of Greek life at Lehigh, as well as future plans, check out the Strengthening Greek Life website:

[www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife)

**Open letter from Joe Sterret, chair of the Task Force for Strengthening Greek Life (6.30.03)**

I'm still not sure what led to President Farrington's request that I chair a task force on improving Greek life at Lehigh. Maybe it was the experience I have gained in my day job evaluating teams and developing ambitious and measurable plans for success. Maybe it was his strong desire to find a chair who really believed that the system could work to the mutual benefit of the students involved and the University. And maybe, he couldn't find anyone else willing to wrestle with the challenges inherent in this issue. In any case, I've found a pretty challenging second job for the next 8 or 9 months!

Fortunately, President Farrington has enlisted a very dedicated and capable group of people to work on this task force. In the few preliminary meetings we have held, I have been impressed with the energy, the team-orientation, and the conviction of our group. We represent a broad range of experiences and perspectives, but we share a strong belief that the Greek system at Lehigh can and must become a vibrant part of the campus learning experience.

Our work has been initiated by a series of thoughtful reports and some fairly clear parameters articulated by our Board of Trustees. A report from the Interfraternity Council (an Internal Audit), the Greek Alumni Council Issues Document, and the consultant report from Npower provide a base of perspectives that includes more commonality than we might have anticipated. The Board spent nearly six hours during their June meeting discussing potential parameters for Greek life at Lehigh. Among them are a very clear expectation that our houses must be safe and clean, and Greek member behavior must be guided by the basic charters around which they were originally organized and established at Lehigh.

There is much to discuss, and our commitment is to share the results of our discussions as broadly as possible through this newsletter. My expectation is that the "answers" (or strategies for success) will very likely be pretty basic and the real key will be in the execution. So not unlike other teams, the challenge is in getting everyone on the same page and then doing the basics well.

All of us on the Greek Life Task Force look forward to the challenge and to working with the Lehigh community to develop a game plan for enriching Greek life at Lehigh.

### **Living conditions, health and safety: focus for summer efforts (6.30.03)**

Lehigh's Greek system is almost as old as the university itself. Since 1872, students have formed meaningful and lasting bonds through their involvement in our Greek community. And just as times have changed since 1872, so has the Greek system; some of these changes have been for the better, but many have not.

Administration, students, alumni, and university trustees all agree that a strong and healthy Greek system is an asset to Lehigh, and that fraternities and sororities that live the values expressed in their charters can enrich the academic and social life on campus.

However, many within these same groups also agree that the core values for a successful Greek system -- leadership, service, scholarship, and brotherhood/sisterhood -- are in danger of being eroded beyond repair, and the unfavorable changes that have occurred in the Greek system over the years must now be addressed with some sense of urgency.

Since the fall of 2002, Lehigh has been engaged in an open process to develop an approach to strengthen its Greek system. This process has included an ongoing dialog with the campus and members of the greater Lehigh community to gain their perspectives, as well as working with outside experts to evaluate and assess the state of Greek life. It is important to note that this is not the first initiative to strengthen Greek life at Lehigh. It follows two other recent task forces on Greek life led by Lehigh's Board of Trustees: the RER initiative in 1996, led by Kevin Clayton, that set objective standards to evaluate chapters, and the ad hoc trustee task force in 2001, led by Ollie Foucek, that examined issues regarding deferred maintenance and capital improvements and created options to help fraternities meet their financial obligations.

It should also be noted that the challenges Lehigh faces are not unique to this university. Campuses all across the country are facing similar difficulties with their Greek chapters, which too often are characterized by declining membership, poor living conditions, and the lack of commitment to the values expressed in their charters.

A Task Force on Strengthening Greek Life was created last spring to recommend actions based on deliberations by all constituent groups with an interest in the process. Comprised of Greek and non-Greek students, faculty, staff, and alumni, the Task Force is working to generate broad-based engagement in the process by keeping all constituent groups informed.

As part of the efforts to strengthen the Greek system, Lehigh's Board of Trustees was updated on initiatives at the June meeting. This update included a tour of Greek houses and discussions of issues critically important to Greek life at Lehigh. During the meeting, trustees affirmed support for the progress already made to develop a successful future for Lehigh's Greek system by supporting a renewed commitment to the core values of national chapters and the university, and by ensuring the health, safety, and well being of all students. They solidly support the efforts made thus far and are committed to seeing the process move forward.

As a result of discussions at the board meeting, decisions were made to address eroding chapter living conditions, which reflect a lack of commitment on the part of some chapters to the values expressed in their charters. Trustees also directed the university administration to continue to take swift action to address situations in which the health or safety of Lehigh students is at risk, and to ensure that living conditions in Greek houses meet acceptable university standards.

The trustees directed the administration to carry out an immediate assessment of chapter living conditions and make improvements where needed before the fall semester. As a result, an assessment of Greek housing conditions began in mid-June.

While most houses were found to need normal cleaning and maintenance, six require considerable improvements to meet health and safety standards for student housing. Alumni House Corporations of the six houses involved are being contacted to alert them to the need for house repairs before the fall semester begins. Additional plans are currently being developed to ensure that future living conditions in all fraternity and sorority houses meet standards of health, safety, and living quality expected in all student housing on Lehigh's campus.

"Greek pride manifests itself in many subtle ways. You can see it embodied in a chapter with a strong record of service or one with a true commitment to scholarship," says Joe Sterrett '76,

head of the Task Force for Strengthening Greek Life, Delta Tau Delta, and Lehigh's director of athletics. "But a lack of Greek pride and a break from historical values is at times easier to see, and all too often at Lehigh it seems to manifest itself in a lack of regard for a true symbol of Lehigh Greek life – the Greek chapter house."

Lehigh's trustees, students, administration, faculty, staff and alumni are committed to help make the Greek system an asset to the academic and social life, as evidenced by the new initiatives and the work done to strengthen the Greek system thus far. But in order for these efforts to take hold and make a difference, chapters must take ownership of changes that need to take place in individual houses.

"Success has to be more than survival," says Sterrett. "Success ultimately depends on the commitment and ability of each chapter, comprised of undergraduates, alumni and national chapter representatives, to embrace the ideals, principles and values of Lehigh, and develop a vision for the future that aligns with the university's student life goals."

### **Summer initiatives support Task Force (6.30.03)**

To support Task Force efforts, university leadership has assigned members of the senior staff to work in support of the Task Force by providing information, staffing support and other resources to ensure that the Greek life review process receives the necessary support throughout the summer on initiatives important to the Greek community. Those initiatives include the following:

#### **Living Conditions - Housing**

To ensure Greek houses meet health and safety standards before students move in this August, the following plans are underway:

- A house-by-house inventory of each living unit, including a report on living conditions, quality of living environment, conditions of major central systems, history and extent of regular maintenance.
- A summary of investments made over the past decade by alumni—house by house--along with current conditions of improvements made previously.
- A report on damage levels from the last school year as a first step in proposing a plan for reducing damage levels in the coming year.
- An evaluation of resources for investment/improvements for houses needing repairs.

#### **Alumni Involvement and Housing Management**

A house-by-house assessment will be carried out of the current and anticipated extent of alumni/ae engagement in all aspects of chapter activity and house management. It will include:

- A short-term qualitative assessment of each chapter's current state of alumni involvement.
- A detailed quantitative assessment of alumni involvement based on survey data from alumni house corporations and the broader alumni population.
- A compiled list of alumni from each chapter who could play a role in charting a course for future house management success.

#### **Staffing to Support Greek Life**

To identify major areas in need of staff support, the following will be examined:

- Current operation of living units as businesses (currently provided by FMA, Regional Services and in some cases, alumni).
- Maintenance of the physical condition of houses (provided by custodians, facilities services).
- Support for living units as incubators of student leaders (currently provided by Student Affairs, Athletics).
- Role of houses as centers of co-curricular learning (currently provided by individual faculty/staff advisors and student affairs).
- Help in involving alumni in the lives of the chapters (currently provided through the Alumni Association).
- Support for the Greek system as a whole (currently provided by Student Affairs/Greek Life staff).

### **Educational/Co-curricular Planning**

Recognizing the inherent strengths provided by small groups of students living together, as well as the challenges presented by having house leadership provided almost exclusively by sophomores and juniors, the following will be explored for the Greek community:

- A review of student leadership and training programs and experiences currently incorporated into the Greek system
- Development of a realistic picture of the current goals of co-curricular programs being planned through student affairs, as well as how these programs can be enhanced.
- Identification of social functions that are desirable for fraternities and sororities based on their particular structure, relationships, missions, etc.
- An assessment of fraternity and sorority members' recognition, incorporation and promotion of their chapter's mission (charter) and goals and their connection (or disconnection) with their nationals' values/goals.
- A review of RER to determine what aspects are working, what are not, and why.

### **Communicating about Greek Life**

To ensure appropriate groups are aware of the progress being made in strengthening Lehigh's Greek community and future plans to support this goal, several actions are planned:

- Reviewing and enhancing plans to inform the campus and broader Lehigh community of developments to strengthen Greek life as they occur during the summer. Regular communication from the Task Force to Greek actives, alumni, and on-campus constituencies will occur.

Plans and progress of these and other initiatives to strengthen Lehigh's Greek system will be communicated with Greek actives, alumni and members of the campus community throughout the summer via electronic communications and face-to-face meetings.

### **E-mail to Campus Community (5.2.03)**

TO: Students, faculty and staff

FROM: John Smeaton and Chris Marshall

DATE: May 2, 2003  
RE: Strengthening Greek Life Update

During the past few months, Npower--a nationally recognized group specializing in revitalizing Greek communities--has met with or received feedback from hundreds of members of the Lehigh community regarding our Greek system, its strengths and its critical challenges.

The resulting report, "Revitalizing the Greek Community at Lehigh University" -- available at [www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/npower-report.pdf](http://www3.lehigh.edu/greeklife/npower-report.pdf) -- provides a helpful and objective source of information for our consideration as we evaluate approaches to strengthen our Greek system.

It is important to recognize that this report is just one of many sources of information that will be used in the assessment process. It is not a solution in itself, and it never was intended to be. The Task Force on Greek Life, chaired by Joe Sterrett, executive director, Athletics, will consider this document in addition to other input. The Task Force will continue work during the summer and early fall to engage additional groups, including trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, students and Greek organizations in this review process. Our appreciation goes out to all those who have already helped to move this process forward.

We remain committed to helping Greek houses at Lehigh develop as healthy and strong organizations that contribute positively to the academic and social life on campus. The only way to succeed will be with high standards, high expectations and high achievement. Please take a moment to review the report, "Revitalizing the Greek Community at Lehigh University" and share any comments with Chris or myself.