FIPG: Origin, membership, policy, key provisions

- Created in 1986 by a handful of men’s national fraternities. Original acronym: Fraternity Insurance Purchasing Group
- Now over fifty members including 17 women’s national fraternities and sororities. Fraternal Information and Programming Group. Risk management consortium.

FIPG: Origin, membership, policy, key provisions (cont’d)

- **Policy:** Includes sections on alcohol & drugs, hazing, sexual abuse/harassment, fire, health and safety and education.
- **Alcohol:** Closed event, meaning a guest list must be used. BYOB or Third Party Vendor must be employed for events with alcohol. No co-sponsorship with taverns. Alcohol and new member education.
- **Hazing:** Utilizes definition developed by the Fraternity Executives Association.
- **Firearms are prohibited in chapter houses.**
Trends

- Litigation resulting from hazing, alcohol-related incidents.
- More concerns with privacy, landlord/tenant disputes, suicides or unnatural deaths, defamation of character. The Millennial parents are being heard from as well. Greek leaders must look through several different lenses before taking action.
- Traditional housing—large houses packed with members—are becoming a rarity, replaced by houses with single rooms, more services.
- A sea change in the manner in which national organizations respond to deaths or serious injury situations. The trend is to reach out, not pull back.

When enough is enough:

- The number of chapters closed by men’s national organizations has continued to increase.
- Anecdotally, there are more unrecognized chapters—chapters not recognized by the host institution but which continue to be recognized by the national organization.
- Collateral damage or unintended consequence factor: When national organizations act decisively and the charter is revoked, that generates more underground or unrecognized groups. No one has authority or jurisdiction over the group.
Freedom of speech:

- At a public institution, the hands of the administration may be tied through the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Typical case: inappropriate or racist party themes or costumes.
- Those restrictions do not apply to the national organizations.

Multi-cultural groups expanding exponentially

- Organization and chain of command may differ from more traditional groups
- Different issues, such as events based upon culture
Freedom of Association: The College of Staten Island Case

- Colony of a men's national fraternity seeking recognition

The Rider University case:

- Significant vibrations from the New Jersey grand jury indictment of two administrators and a live-in graduate advisor after the death of a freshman in a fraternity house. The death was attributed to alcohol consumed during a “big/little” event in the chapter house. The freshman was joining the fraternity and therefore the activity was indeed hazing.

- The cases against the Dean of Students and the Greek Advisor were dismissed by the prosecuting attorney about three weeks later but the case continues to reverberate around the country.
The Rider University case: (cont’d)

- Graduate student was given more extensive training and was to be a “Sober presence” in the chapter house. This case brings renewed scrutiny to the job description and responsibilities and definitions contained therein for a graduate advisor or house director and indeed for advisors at all levels.
- What are the expectations for intervention in or prevention of illegal activities? Will this have a chilling effect upon the efforts by institutions to provide leadership and the living/learning philosophy in houses or groups through advisors?

The Rider University case: (cont’d)

- At this point in time, two of the three remaining individuals charged with hazing under New Jersey law, including the graduate advisor, have been accepted into a pre-trial diversion program. A civil suit against the university and the national fraternity, among other defendants, was filed recently.
- Other cases of interest
How the NPC women do it!

- Our structure within the National Panhellenic Conference
- Our approach to rules
- Our current approach to social policy
- Relationships
- Relationship statements
- What we can do better

Our structure within NPC

- Founded in 1902
- United through a series of unanimous agreements
- Respect for autonomy of individual groups
- Leadership rotates among 26 groups
- Board of Directors, Executive Committee
- Standing committees
Our Approach to Rules

- UNANIMOUS AGREEMENTS include agreements on:
  - jurisdiction of the college Panhellenic
  - recruitment and membership
  - standards of ethical conduct
  - extension
  - judicial procedures
  - questionnaires and freedom of association.
- The desired environment is a level playing field

Our current approach to social policies

- Many NPC organizations are FIPG +
- Event planning = more than just logistics
- Education is key
  - Multiple opportunities
  - Multiple constituencies and mediums
  - Shared practice of men’s and women’s groups
- Governing Documents
Relationships

- Highly valued
- Respect for the host institution
- Communication/ partnership with Student Affairs office
- Trend is to include, partner and be proactive

Relationship Statements

- Began to emerge and increase in number in the last 20 years
- Tended to take one of two approaches
  - Articulate specific standards (e.g. Maryland plan)
  - More of a “contract” of minimum expectations
- Continued recognition depends on a chapter’s successful completion of the reporting required and meeting the standards (grades, meeting attendance) specified in the contract each year.
Relationship Statements (cont’d)

- Expectations range anywhere from chapter grade requirements to community service hours
- How proposed or renewed statements move through NPC
- How they can positively impact the community
  - Delaware, Maryland
- How they can become ineffective
  - Colorado

The next generation? Campus Assessments

- Franklin Square group convenes 2002
- Franklin Square concept results in:
  - Call for Values Congruence 2003
  - NPC publishes its response about its values, programming and accountability soon after.
  - NIC establishes standards 2005
  - NIC and NPC develop their own assessment plan in response to the assessment recommendation in the Call FVC 2006
  - Assessment pilots begin 2007
The community and its challenges and opportunities continue to evolve.