

*Shared Standards Agreement for  
Fraternities and Sororities  
at  
Virginia Commonwealth University*



V i r g i n i a   C o m m o n w e a l t h   U n i v e r s i t y

*A Relationship Statement between  
The Fraternity and Sorority Governing Councils of Virginia  
Commonwealth University*

*and it's*

*Inter/National  
Fraternities and Sororities*

*Adopted: April 14, 2009  
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# Shared Standards Agreement for Fraternities and Sororities at Virginia Commonwealth University

## Table of Contents

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Virginia Commonwealth University Mission Statement             | Page 3  |
| Shared Standards Agreement Purpose Statement                   | Page 3  |
| Special Provisions for Fraternities and Sororities             | Page 4  |
| Evaluation Category 1: Academic Performance                    | Page 8  |
| Evaluation Category 2: Membership Development/Education        | Page 9  |
| Evaluation Category 3: Risk Management and Legal Liability     | Page 11 |
| Evaluation Category 4: Leadership & Community Engagement       | Page 12 |
| Evaluation Category 5: Community Service and Philanthropy      | Page 13 |
| Evaluation Category 6: Membership Recruitment/Intake Practices | Page 14 |
| Evaluation Category 7: Chapter Management                      | Page 15 |
| Governing Council and Institutional Responsibilities           | Page 17 |
| Annual Evaluation and Award Process                            | Page 18 |
| Conclusion and Affirmation                                     | Page 20 |

# Virginia Commonwealth University Mission Statement

Virginia Commonwealth University is dedicated to excellence in instruction in an atmosphere of free inquiry and scholarship so that its students may realize their full potential as informed, productive citizens with a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

The University serves the local, state, national and international communities with excellence through its scholarly activities, its diverse educational programs and its public service activities. The University also contributes its intellectual and creative expertise in the development of innovative approaches to meet the changing needs of our society.

VCU is one university with a common future, that is engaged with and committed to the community of which it is a part, and which purposefully and proudly provides access and opportunity that many major research universities do not, while embracing and celebrating diversity in its student body, faculty, staff and administration, and recognizing that learning, scholarship, service and practice are at the heart of what VCU does, and define what VCU is.

The university takes its founding date of 1838 from the year the Medical College of Virginia was created as the medical department of Hampden-Sydney College. MCV became independent in 1854 and state-affiliated in 1860. VCU's Monroe Park Campus began in 1917 as the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health. In 1925, it became the Richmond division of the College of William and Mary; and in 1939, its name was changed to Richmond Professional Institute. It separated from William and Mary in 1962 to become an independent state institution. In 1968, MCV and RPI merged to become Virginia Commonwealth University, the most comprehensive urban university in the state and one of the top research universities in the nation.

## Shared Standards Agreement Purpose Statement

The *Shared Standards Agreement for Fraternities and Sororities at Virginia Commonwealth University* is implemented to improve the management and the quality of the fraternity and sorority experience at Virginia Commonwealth University. The agreement is between the member chapters of the College Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council and Interfraternity Council with their respective governing council. These Shared Standards will be implemented and documented by the chapters and governing councils in coordination with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

The purpose of the *Shared Standards Agreement for Fraternities and Sororities* is (1) to improve the management and quality of fraternities and sororities at Virginia Commonwealth University by outlining a clear, but comprehensive, set of standards that each chapter must attain to be recognized by the governing council, and thus the University; (2) to provide an annual evaluation tool in which fraternities and sororities can participate in a self-evaluation process and receive recognition for surpassing the chapter standards, and (3) to empower students to be part of the decision making process in determining how they wish to function within the greater University community. The intent of the shared standards process is to provide a framework by which chapters can quantify and document their activities and successes, while creating a tool by which fraternities and sororities can be evaluated.

# Virginia Commonwealth University

## Special Provisions for Fraternities and Sororities

(As stated in the VCU University Student Commons & Activities Policy Book)

### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Official registration of men's and women's fraternities and sororities will be conferred by the University Student Commons and Activities (USCA) as part of the process of registering all student organizations on the Monroe Park Campus.

### 2.0 Procedures

Fraternities and Sororities must also meet the following conditions:

- 2.1 Fraternities and sororities must meet all the conditions for the registration of a student organization as defined in the "*Procedures for Registered Student Organizations on the Monroe Park Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University.*"
- 2.2 Each fraternity is expected to maintain membership in one of the established campus governing councils, as applicable: College Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, or Interfraternity Council.
  - 2.2.1 If an inter/national organization does not fall under the provision of these governing councils, they may be under the administrative guidance of the Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Team at VCU until an appropriate governing body is formed.
- 2.3 Each fraternity or sorority seeking registration must be in good standing with its inter/national organization. All local fraternities may be required, as a condition of registration, to adopt standards equivalent to those of the inter/national organizations.
- 2.4 Each fraternity seeking official University recognition must place a copy of its inter/national and local governing documents on file with USC&A. These documents will be kept in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Groups previously identified to the University by their /international organizations as being strictly prohibited from filing their constitutive documents will provide them for review at the time of seeking Official Recognition, and will make them available to the University upon request at any future time. The governing documents shall include (if they exist):
  - 2.4.1 Inter/National Constitution and Bylaws.
  - 2.4.2 Inter/National Standing Rules and Policies.
  - 2.4.3 Local chapter Bylaws, Operating Procedures, and Chapter Code of Conduct.
  - 2.4.4 Local Articles of Incorporation (if they exist).
  - 2.4.5 Copies of the above documents, when revised, are to be promptly filed.
- 2.5 Each fraternity and sorority must adhere to the provisions of its governing documents.
- 2.6 Each fraternity and sorority will meet at least once a semester with a university designee to discuss chapter issues.

- 2.7 Each fraternity and sorority will follow the expectations stated in the *Shared Standards Agreement for Fraternities and Sororities at Virginia Commonwealth University*.
- 2.8 The chapter's facility (chapter house, residence, chapter room, lodge, or meeting area), if any, must be safe and provide a healthy living environment, including, but not limited to, adequate refuse collection, property upkeep and maintenance, and satisfaction of building, zoning, and safety codes as required by local fire, health, and governmental agencies. This provision includes, but is not limited to, the requirement that appropriate government agencies (e.g., Fire Department, Department of Health Services) are asked to perform regular inspections on an annual basis and certify that each facility complies with applicable laws and regulations under their respective jurisdictions.
  - 2.8.1 Each fraternity and sorority must annually file a current certificate of liability insurance coverage with USC&A. Organizations which do not have continuous year round coverage must file a certificate of insurance showing proof of liability coverage on an event-by-event basis.
- 2.9 Each fraternity and sorority is expected to conduct its business practices in a lawful and ethical manner, maintaining fair personnel practices and conducting its fiscal affairs in accordance with generally accepted practices.
- 2.10 Each fraternity and sorority shall establish, maintain, and comply with a well-defined code of conduct, and shall ensure that all of its members have a working understanding of the code of conduct. The fraternity or sorority shall have an internal judicial system to enforce this code. The University must receive an annual copy of this code of conduct if it is not clearly included in the organization's constitution/bylaws.
- 2.11 Each fraternity and sorority shall establish and maintain a program for the academic advancement of each of its members and shall designate a person to maintain accurate membership rosters, receive chapter grade reports, and act as a liaison to USC&A.
- 2.12 The University may periodically require fraternities and sororities to demonstrate that the provisions of this document have been met. However, the University assumes no responsibility or liability for enforcing compliance, which is the sole responsibility of each fraternity.

### **3.0 Applicable University services**

- 3.1 Fraternities and sororities which agree to and abide by the aforementioned provisions and regulations for official recognition, and are in good standing (i.e., not subject to any sanction imposed by their inter/national organization, campus governing council or USC&A which restricts eligibility), are eligible to receive the following services from the University:
  - 3.1.1 Advice and counsel, as well as referrals and resources, will be offered in the areas of chapter development and programming, leadership development, personal safety and risk management, alcohol and substance use and abuse, sexual assault and abuse, stress management, eating disorders, etc.
  - 3.1.2 Additional assistance and counsel may be available in the areas of chapter governance; judicial concerns; interpreting University policies, procedures and regulations; providing information on state and municipal law as they relate to membership activities (e.g., hazing); educational and social programming; general fiscal matters; emergency preparedness; etc.
  - 3.1.3 The University will provide, upon request and within applicable University policy and law, such services as maintaining membership records, computing fraternity grade point averages and standings, as well as placing holds on the records of financially delinquent chapter members.

- 3.1.4 The governing councils shall be permitted to develop and maintain a system for adjudicating violations of University policies and procedures by fraternities under the direction of the University Student Commons and Activities staff responsible for student organization judicial action. All activity and decisions of the fraternity judicial committees shall be subject to review and final authority of the University judicial system for student organizations.

#### **4.0 Definitions**

- 4.1 Fraternity: an organization which operates under the provisions of Title IX of the educational Amendments and IRS Code Title 26, 501.c.7 and which it permitted to exclusively admit men. (Note: some women's organizations are legally a "fraternity" but for VCU purposes fraternity refers to men's organizations.)
- 4.2 Sorority: an organization which operates under the provisions of Title IX of the educational Amendments and IRS Code 501.c.7 and which it permitted to exclusively admit women.
- 4.3 Local Fraternity or Sorority: an organization which operates under the provisions of Title IX of the educational Amendments and IRS Code 501.c.7 but which does not belong to a national or international governing organization.
- 4.4 Risk Management: for the purposes of this document and interpretations of policies, practices and judicial action, the definition of risk management and it's component elements shall be that of the most recent version of the FIPG, Inc. Risk Management Policy.

#### **5.0 References**

- 5.1 Procedures for Registered Student Organizations on the Monroe Park Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University
- 5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Registered Student Organizations on the Monroe Park Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University

#### **6.0 Approvals and Revisions**

SAAC Approval: April 27, 2001

Revised: Format, procedures, references 4/5/06, 9/1/08, 2/27/09

# Areas of Shared Standards

The annual review of chapter performance will be based on a three level system in the following seven areas of shared standards:

- (1) Academic Achievement
- (2) Membership Development/Education
- (3) Risk Management and Legal Liability
- (4) Leadership & Community Engagement
- (5) Community Service and Philanthropy
- (6) Membership Recruitment/Intake Practices
- (7) Chapter Management

The three levels of expectation are as follows:

**Level I:** To be recognized by a fraternity and sorority governing council at Virginia Commonwealth University, every chapter is expected to fulfill the basic items set forth in the Level I criteria. If, for any reason, the chapter does not complete the items in Level I in all seven categories, the chapters will be asked to attend a “Show Cause” hearing by the governing council.

**Level II:** For a chapter to be eligible to receive an “Area of Excellence” award at the annual Leadership and Service Awards Ceremony, the chapter will need to complete the items stated in Level II in any or in all of the seven areas of shared standards. The Level II items are not a requirement to maintain the chapter in good standing with the governing council; the criteria are an incentive to be recognized for excellence in any or all of the seven areas.

**Level III:** For a chapter to be considered for the “Fraternity or Sorority of the Year” award, the chapter is encouraged to complete the items listed in Level III in every section. Fulfillment of any Level III criteria, along with all of the Level II criteria in every section, will place the chapter in consideration for “Fraternity or Sorority of the Year.”

# Shared Standards Area 1: Academic Performance

Academic success is a standard of the University and is a necessary element of a fraternity or sorority's contribution to and support of the University mission. The fraternity and sorority community believes that the highest priority in each organization's general program should be given to the development and promotion of high academic achievement.

## Academic Performance Level I:

1. **Scholarship Chair:** The chapter will elect an individual who will develop and present relevant programs and consult with the administration when necessary on academic issues. This individual will also provide each member with a list of campus academic resources.
2. **Member Academic Standard:** The chapter will observe its inter/national organization's minimum grade point average requirement for joining, initiation, holding office, and good standing of a chapter member. The chapter will observe its governing council minimum grade point average requirement for membership (if any).
3. **Chapter Event Management:** The chapter will not sponsor or permit activities by its chapter or its members that disturb classes, disrupt study in the library, an individual's room, or other places where a student should enjoy silence, or interrupt faculty and/or students in their academic pursuits.

## Academic Performance Level II:

4. **Chapter Academic Performance:** The chapter will achieve an all-chapter grade point average above the all-men's or all-women's average during every semester.
5. **Scholarship Programming Plan:** The chapter will annually develop and submit a copy of its scholarship programming plan to the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life prior to October 1. This plan must include two study skills/enhancement programs per semester.
6. **Chapter Officer Grade Requirement:** The chapter has a higher GPA requirement for officers than for non-officer members.
7. **Commitment Release for Academic Conflicts:** The chapter will take care to see that recruitment/intake, new member education, and membership activities do not compromise the academic performance of prospective new members, new members or initiated members. The chapter's policy regarding academic conflicts will be included in the chapter scholarship programming plan submitted by October 1.

## Academic Performance Level III:

8. **Academic Recognition Program:** The chapter will develop programs that encourage and recognize academic achievement and stimulate intellectual growth. These programs might include awards for academic achievement or Deans List standings. One such program must be completed every academic year. The recognition program should be a part of the Scholarship Programming Plan.

9. **Faculty Member Interaction:** The chapter will develop programs that encourage and promote student/faculty relations. These programs might include an invited speaker to address the chapter, or discussions led by a faculty member, or a social interaction for members of the chapter and members of the faculty. One such program must be completed every academic year.
10. **Individual Chapter Member Performance:** No chapter members have fallen below a 2.0 semester GPA for the previous 2 semesters.
11. **Academic Support Services:** The chapter coordinates academic support services for its members using University support services and resources.

## Shared Standards Area 2: Membership Development & Education

\* For this document, the use of the term new member will refer to any individual classified as a pledge, new affiliate, associate member, aspirant, member currently in process or a new member of a fraternity or sorority.

In order to compliment a strong recruitment/membership intake program, each fraternity and sorority is obligated to have a positive member development program. Educational and related activities are necessary if each new member is to become familiar with and accept both the financial and social aspects of his/her chapter. The Fraternity and Sorority Community believes that the strength of any fraternity or sorority will be realized through a constructive new member education and total membership development program, which will provide opportunities for leadership development, general enthusiasm for the organization's ideals, and set a sound base for lifetime membership.

### Membership Development & Education Level I:

1. **New Member Education Plan and Member Development Program:** The chapter will review and discuss with its Chapter Advisor and the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life the membership education plan to be implemented by the chapter for new members as well as the entire chapter. A copy of the membership education plan must be submitted to the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life by September 1 for fall new member education and February 15 for spring new member education.
2. **Initiation Deadline:** All chapters will complete their new member education program and complete the initiation ceremony for all new members in the time period determined by their respective governing council but no more than eight weeks. This time period will also not exceed past two weeks prior to academic exam week of that semester. This period of time is adequate time to complete all of the inter/national and University requirements for new member education.
3. **Academic/Employment Excuses Policy:** Chapters will include nothing in the program that will intentionally hamper the academic performance of the new members or disrupt the academic pursuits of the community. In addition, chapters will include nothing in the program that is antagonistic towards another group. Each chapter will submit its policy regarding academic and employment excuses with the scholarship program due on September 15/February 15 of the academic year.

4. **Alcohol-Free Social Events:** Every fraternity and sorority will sponsor one alcohol-free social event per academic semester. These can be co-sponsored events with other fraternal organizations or other student organizations.

### **Membership Development & Education Level II:**

5. **Chapter History:** Each chapter will conduct a new member meeting in which the chapter president or another officer discusses pertinent information and history of the chapter at Virginia Commonwealth University, the history of the University, and all relevant inter/national policies.
6. **Issues Programming:** Each chapter is required to provide programming for new members and initiated members on the following issues:
  - Hazing
  - Legal liability and/or risk management
  - Sexism and/or sexual abuse and/or gender issues
  - Alcohol and drug use and abuse
  - Diversity and/or non-discrimination

If 80% of the chapter membership is in attendance for a University or organization sponsored lecture on one of the above topics, this can serve as the chapter programming on that topic. In-house chapter programs will involve the participation of members of the faculty, staff, administration, and/or an outside expert.

7. **Governing Council New Member Program:** 80% of new members will participate in any programs developed by the chapter's respective governing council.

### **Membership Development & Education Level III:**

8. **Community Service Event:** The new member class will participate in one service project during the semester in which they are initiated. This can be planned by the chapter or the new members.
9. **Retention of Members:** The chapter will retain at least 80% of the new members from the beginning to end of the new member education program. The chapter will retain at least 90% of initiated members, not including those that graduate in December or May.
10. **Parents Program:** Each chapter will develop a parent's education and orientation document or letter that should, at the very least, include an introduction to the fraternity and new member responsibilities. This will be sent to the new member's parents at an appropriate time, unless the new member requests in writing to the new member educator to be excluded. The new member educator should retain all requests, which may be shared with the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life. Verification of the parent program or letter will be submitted to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life by March 15 of the academic year.
11. **Alumni/ae Relations Program:** Each fraternity and sorority is expected to work closely with their alumni/ae to plan a program where alumni can get to know the current members and begin the networking process. Possible topics of these programs include careers, the job search process, and resume building. The optimal times for this type of programming would be Homecoming or Founders Day. Report of this program will be submitted within 10 days of the event.

12. **Campus Resources:** The chapter involves the following departments in its membership development program: campus activities, admissions, volunteer services, student organization development, residence life, career center, counseling center, wellness center.
13. **Initiation Deadline:** The chapter will initiate members between four to six weeks after the education process begins.

## **Shared Standards Area 3: Risk Management & Legal Liability**

Like all Virginia Commonwealth University students, members of fraternities and sororities are expected to comply with University regulations and are subject to local, state, and federal law. For infractions of chapter or governing council regulations, the members are subject to chapter and University governing council judicial processes. When individual fraternity or sorority members commit breaches of University regulations or public laws, they are accountable as individuals to the respective authorities. When fraternities and sororities are responsible for violating University regulations, they are subject to the governing council judicial processes as chapters and to appropriate sanctions by council on recommendation from the council judicial board.

### **Risk Management & Legal Liability Level I:**

1. **Social Host Responsibility:** Each chapter will follow the guidelines of student conduct printed in the Virginia Commonwealth University Student Handbook and published on the Virginia Commonwealth University website at <http://www.provost.vcu.edu/policies/> or any additions made thereafter.
2. **Governing Council Risk Management Policy:** Each chapter will follow the Fraternity and Sorority Governing Council Risk Management Guidelines. Chapters will educate all members on this policy and all members will sign this policy – documentation due by October 1.
3. **Housing Facility Inspections** (if applicable): Each chapter performs regular inspections on an annual basis and certifies that each facility complies with applicable laws and regulations under their respective jurisdictions. Documentation due April 1.
4. **Judicial/Standards Board:** Each chapter holds members accountable for membership expectations through an internal judicial board.
5. **Council Risk Management Training:** Each chapter Risk Manager, Social Chair, or officer responsible for planning events will participate in an annual training on University policies and procedures.

### **Risk Management & Legal Liability Level II:**

6. **Violations:** Chapters will not have any violations resulting in a judicial hearing with a result of responsible.

7. **Crisis Management Plan:** The chapter develops a crisis management plan and each member is educated about this plan. A copy of this plan is due by September 15 and the education will take place by October 1.

#### **Risk Management & Legal Liability Level III:**

8. **Campus Police:** The chapter maintains a positive relationship with VCU Police Department and Richmond Police Department, and hosts a joint program with members of VCUPD annually.

## **Shared Standards Area 4: Leadership & Community Engagement**

The fraternity and sorority community at Virginia Commonwealth University values campus involvement and leadership as central features of the fraternity and sorority experience. Virginia Commonwealth University values the involvement of all students in the life of the campus, and encourages members of the fraternity and sorority community to be involved in student organizations and leadership opportunities outside of their chapter experience.

#### **Leadership & Community Engagement Level I:**

1. **Campus and Community Involvement:** Each chapter will have at a minimum 50% of its membership involved in another student organization at Virginia Commonwealth University or a volunteer role in the Richmond Community. The chapter will submit a list of members and their involvement by April 1.
2. **Leadership Training:** Executive officers in every chapter are expected to take part in leadership education sponsored and provided either by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and/or the inter/national organization of which the leaders are a part. These include but are not limited to: Leadership Retreat, Officer Training, and Chapter President Roundtables. Report of the chapter's attendance at the inter/national convention or leadership training must be submitted no later than October 1.
3. **Participation in Council Events:** Each chapter will participate in community service, philanthropic, educational and social activities sponsored by the governing councils that are classified as "community-wide" events. These events would include, but are not limited to: Speakers, Greek Week, Fraternity and Sorority Life Awards, New Member Programs, and Officer Roundtables.

#### **Leadership & Community Engagement Level II:**

4. **Participation in Virginia Commonwealth University Events:** Each chapter is expected to participate in the major campus events of Virginia Commonwealth University. The chapter is expected to participate in four of the following on an annual basis: APB sponsored events, Welcome Week, Homecoming, Fall Fest, Intercultural Festival, Into the Streets, Black History Month, SOVO Fair, Fall Block, Relay for Life, or a cultural/arts event.

5. **Co-Sponsorship of Events:** Every chapter is expected to host an event (social, educational, service, etc.) with another chapter in the fraternity and sorority community, outside of your chapter's governing council. Proof of the program is due within 10 days after the event to the chapter's governing council Advisor.
6. **Fraternal Honoraries and Councils:** Each chapter is expected to have members involved in Order of Omega or in the governing council. This information will be tracked by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the time of honorary initiations and council officer transitions.

### **Leadership & Community Engagement Level III:**

7. **Non-Affiliated Students:** The chapter provides opportunities for non-affiliated students to interact with members in a productive manner at least once a year outside of recruitment/intake programs.
8. **Co-Sponsorship of Events (with an organization outside of fraternity and sorority life):** Every chapter is expected to host an event (social, educational, service, etc.) with another student organization. Proof of the program is due within 10 days of the event to the chapter's governing council Advisor.
9. **Public Relations/Marketing Plan:** The chapter is intentional about communicating with the campus newspaper and other media outlets.

## **Shared Standards Area 5: Community Service & Philanthropy**

One of the cornerstones of Fraternity and Sorority Life at Virginia Commonwealth University is giving back to the community. An important aspect of fraternity and sorority membership is recognizing the opportunities to be a good member of the University and the local communities. This will be achieved through a positive program of involvement with the various public service and philanthropic activities offered within Virginia Commonwealth University and the greater Richmond community.

### **Community Service & Philanthropy Level I:**

1. **Community Service and Philanthropy Chair:** The chapter will elect an individual who will coordinate all community service and philanthropic activities, and be responsible for reporting and verifying such activities with the chapter's governing council Advisor within 10 days of the event.
2. **Community Service Participation:** Each chapter will participate in at least two service events per year in which at least 50% of the chapter participates. Reports are due 10 days following the event.
3. **Community-Wide Service Events:** The chapter will participate in community service and philanthropic activities that have been voted on by the governing councils that are classified as "community-wide" service or philanthropic events.
4. **Philanthropy Event:** Each chapter holds one philanthropy event per year, donating at least \$200.00 to the national or local philanthropic organization.

### **Community Service & Philanthropy Level II:**

5. **Community Service Participation:** Each chapter will participate in at least two service events per semester in which at least 50% of the chapter participates. Reports are due 10 days following the event.
6. **Support of Philanthropy Events:** Each chapter will participate in or donate to at least 2 other chapters' philanthropy events or service programs. One event/program will be within the governing council members, and one will be outside of the governing council membership. Reports are due 10 days following the event.

### **Community Service & Philanthropy Level III:**

7. **Co-sponsored service:** The chapter works with another fraternity, sorority or student organization - outside of the chapter's council - on one major campus service program each year.
8. **Philanthropy Event:** Each chapter holds one philanthropy event per semester, donating at least \$500.00 to the national or local philanthropic organization.

## **Shared Standards Area 6: Membership Recruitment/Intake Practices**

The purpose of recruitment/intake is to present the fraternity and sorority alternative to Virginia Commonwealth University students who are not affiliated with a fraternity or sorority. Recruitment/intake efforts of fraternities and sororities should be to include as many students as is reasonably possible who desire membership, should be open and honest, and introduce prospective members to all phases of a chapter's activities and to the personal and financial responsibilities that membership entails.

### **Membership Recruitment/Intake Level I:**

1. **Administrative Paperwork:** For NPHC/MGC chapters- submits Intent to Conduct Intake Form and all necessary documents. For IFC/CPC chapters- submits up to date roster prior to extending any membership invitations. All students that accept membership must fill out the VCU Hazing and Grade Release card.
2. **Membership Invitations:** A chapter will only extend invitations of membership to those potential members who meet the minimum grade point average determined by their respective governing council, and will not extend bids prior to a grade check by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Each chapter has the opportunity to establish a higher grade point average standard for membership.
3. **Recruitment/Intake Rules and Regulations:** It is expected that all recruitment/intake regulations set by the governing council will be followed before, during, and after the formal and informal recruitment/intake period. At such time that these regulations are not followed, the proper procedures will be taken to discipline the chapter in violation. See the governing council Recruitment/Intake Regulations.

4. **Recruitment/Intake Officer:** Each chapter will elect an individual who will be responsible for managing all procedures of membership recruitment/intake including but not limited to: recruitment/intake retreat each semester for its members, attend any/all governing council meetings regarding recruitment/intake, distribution of evaluations to members on behalf of the governing council and complete a personal in-depth evaluation following recruitment/intake.
5. **Alcohol-Free:** In support of the governing council risk management guidelines, all recruitment/intake and new member activities are alcohol free.

#### **Membership Recruitment/Intake Level II:**

6. **Membership Requirements:** Every chapter will provide a detailed description of all membership requirements for initiated members and new members to the chapters governing council Advisor by October 1. This report is to include: Semester or Yearly Dues; New Member Fees; Additional Fees assessed by the organization.

#### **Membership Recruitment/Intake Level III:**

7. **Training of Members:** The chapter will hold a recruitment/intake training program for members to communicate expectations in regard to recruitment/intake/promotion of the chapter.

## **Shared Standards Area 7: Chapter Management**

The fraternity and sorority community expects all of its chapters to reflect basic chapter management functions ranging from financial management to meeting and constitution requirements.

#### **Chapter Management Level I:**

1. **Special Provisions for Fraternities and Sororities:** The chapter has complete documentation required by the *Special Provisions for Fraternities and Sororities*. One verification letter that the documents exist and their local chapter location can be sent from the proper authority. This letter will serve as the required documentation to meet this requirement.
  - a. Inter/National Constitution and Bylaws
  - b. Inter/National Standing Rules and Policies
  - c. Local chapter Bylaws, Operating Procedures, and Chapter Code of Conduct
  - d. Local Articles of Incorporation (if they exist)
  - e. Current certificate of liability insurance coverage
2. **Payment of Individual and Council Dues:** The chapter has paid on time and in full its dues to its respective governing council.
3. **Communication with University Administration:** The chapter maintains a positive relationship with the chapter's governing council advisor, meeting with this staff member on a regular basis.
4. **Communication with Inter/National Staff and Volunteers:** The chapter maintains regular communication with its inter/national staff and volunteer board.

5. **Meetings:** The chapter conducts meetings at least every other week and distributes minutes.

### **Chapter Management Level II:**

6. **Constitution and Bylaws:** The Chapter Constitution and Bylaws are updated and ratified annually.
7. **Strategic Plan/Goals:** The chapter will develop goals on an annual basis and communicate these to the chapter advisor, inter/national staff and volunteers, and the chapter's governing council Advisor. Due October 1.
8. **IRS 990 Forms:** The chapter, graduate or alumni/ae board files an IRS Form 990 annually if required. Verification of the submission of this form will be submitted to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life by April 1.
9. **Annual Budget:** Each chapter will have a written annual budget including income and expenditures that is presented to and approved by membership. Verification of the existence of a budget will be submitted to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life by October 1.
10. **External Funding Sources:** The chapter applies for funding from outside sources. This could include the Monroe Park Campus Student Government Association or other identified funding sources.
11. **Chapter Officer Elections and Transition:** The chapter is intentional about the recruitment/intake, selection and training of officers. Chapter Officers performance is also reviewed on a regular basis.
12. **Chapter Calendar:** The chapter coordinates and publishes a semester calendar of important events.

### **Chapter Management Level III:**

13. **Financial Advisor or Financial Service:** The chapter has a specific advisor for finance, accountant, or a contact with a Greek financial service. The name and contact information of the advisor, accountant or financial service is due on October 1.
14. **Financial Status Improvement:** The chapter shows improvement in regard to overall debt management, or maintenance of a no-debt status. Documentation from inter/national office or national board due by April 1.

## **Governing Council & Institutional Responsibility and Commitment**

The university and the governing councils have obligations to fraternities and sororities just as the fraternities and sororities have obligations to the institution and the governing councils.

To enable the University to contribute effectively to the well-being of the fraternity and sorority community, and to implement means that encourage the recognition and discharge by fraternities and sororities of their responsibility to Virginia Commonwealth University, the University shall:

1. Provide fraternities and sororities with guidance through the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life;
2. Provide fraternities and sororities with resources for leadership training, scholarship improvement, problem-solving, and program planning;
3. Assist fraternities and sororities in planning to recruit members
4. Assist fraternities and sororities in communicating with their alumni;
5. Assist fraternities and sororities in finding opportunities for service to Virginia Commonwealth University and the Richmond community; and
6. Assist fraternities and sororities in finding suitable meeting space.

### **Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life**

1. Work with the fraternities and sororities to assist them in complying with the responsibilities delineated in this statement, especially through the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life. The Coordinator(s) for Fraternity and Sorority Life serves as the primary fraternity and sorority advisor of the University. It is expected that the fraternity and sorority leaders will keep the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life informed of all chapter activities and concerns. Additionally, it is expected that the Coordinator of Fraternity and Sorority Life meet with each chapter president at least once per semester to discuss chapter progress.
2. Maintain files on inter/national organizations, specifically regarding policies and procedures pertaining to risk management, legal liability, member education, and scholarship.
3. Maintain accurate and timely records on membership, new members, officers, advisors, and house corporations (if applicable) of the chapter.
4. Provide resources or workshops for leadership training, alcohol and drug education, and other educational programming.
5. Provide chapters with accurate scholarship reports.
6. Meet regularly with all chapter advisors (collectively at least 5 times a year).
7. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life will also compile and produce a comprehensive report of the activities of the fraternity and sorority community for the year, to include all chapter and governing council(s) activities and statistics.

# Annual Review Process

1. **Annual Review Board:** The Annual Review Board will consist of the governing council executive board officers and will be chaired by the Associate Director for Programs and Educational Services. Chapter reviews will be completed by the governing council for which the chapter is a member.
2. **Evaluation Process:** The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life will submit a written audit report on each chapter to the Annual Review Board.

The audit report will determine the level at which the chapter is operating based on the documentation provided by the chapter throughout the year, and then recommend to the Annual Review Board the appropriate level. The purpose of the Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life making the initial evaluation will be:

- To provide consistency in the review process;
- To simplify the process;
- To provide an independent viewpoint from the Annual Review Board.

In addition, the Coordinator(s) for Fraternity and Sorority Life is involved in the day-to-day activities of all chapters at the University and can provide valuable documentation and information during the review process.

Based on the written audit report and recommended operation level, the Annual Review Board will designate each chapter as one of the following:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Level I</b>   | Meets all standards outlined in each category under “Level I”   |
| <b>Level II</b>  | Meets all standards outlined in each category under “Level II”  |
| <b>Level III</b> | Meets all standards outlined in each category under “Level III” |

The chapter’s evaluation rating will be made available to alumni/ae and inter/national administrative offices, chapter advisors, corporation board officers, and other local and inter/national volunteers working with the specific organization. The results of the Annual Review will not be published.

3. **Process for Chapters not operating at Level I:** Chapters that do not earn Level I status during the review will be scheduled for a “Show Cause Hearing,” the week prior to classes starting the following fall semester.

Show Cause Hearing: The Chapter President, Executive Board and Advisor will attend a Show Cause Hearing with the Executive Board of the respective governing council to determine a specific Chapter Action Plan for the semester it is under review. During this time, the chapter will not be permitted to:

- a. host social activities involving alcohol
- b. participate in intramural competition, and

Chapter Action Plans: will involve specific, measurable goals with an assigned completion date. These plans will be communicated with the inter/national organization and require support through its staff and volunteer structure.

Failure to Complete Chapter Action Plans: If a chapter fails to meet the expectations in the Chapter Action Plan, the Executive Board of the respective governing council can create a new set of expectations or refer the chapter to the governing councils judicial board for review of failure to meet the expectations.

4. **Awards:** The annual Fraternity and Sorority Life Awards process will be completed every spring following the submission of all chapter documentation on April 1. All late submissions will not be considered for chapter awards at the ceremony. There will be no separate applications for chapter awards: all decisions will be based on the information submitted in the annual report- which will be reflective of each evaluation category. There will only be separate applications for individual awards.

# Conclusion and Affirmation

It may become necessary from time to time, to change or modify this agreement. This agreement will be signed annually by the executive officers of each fraternity and sorority. This signature page will indicate that each officer and advisor listed below has received a copy of the *Shared Standards Agreement for Fraternities and Sororities at Virginia Commonwealth University*, and understands that he/she should have read and will be held accountable for its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_ chapter of \_\_\_\_\_

**For the Chapter:**

|                           | Printed Name: | Signature: | Date: |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------|-------|
| President                 |               |            |       |
| Vice President            |               |            |       |
| Membership Education      |               |            |       |
| Risk Management Chair     |               |            |       |
| Recruitment/Rush/Intake   |               |            |       |
| Council Delegate          |               |            |       |
| New Member Educator       |               |            |       |
| Scholarship Chair         |               |            |       |
| Philanthropy/Service      |               |            |       |
| Social Chair              |               |            |       |
| Alumni/ae Relations Chair |               |            |       |
| Treasurer                 |               |            |       |
| Secretary                 |               |            |       |
| Intramural Rep.           |               |            |       |
| Historian                 |               |            |       |
| Ritual Chair              |               |            |       |
| Chapter Advisor           |               |            |       |

**For the Council:**

|                   | Printed Name: | Signature: | Date: |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|-------|
| Council President |               |            |       |
| Council Advisor   |               |            |       |

*Signed affirmation due no later than September 1*

***Date filed with the Council:*** \_\_\_\_\_

# VCU Shared Standards Checklist 2011-2012

| Area   | Criteria  | Deadline     | Completed   | Example documentation                                |
|--|---|--------------|---|--|
| <b>Area 1: Academic Performance</b>                            |   |              |   |  |
| Level I  | Chapter has a scholarship chair   | October 1    |   | Officer Update Form                                  |
|  | Chapter observes the inter/national academic standard                     | April 1      |   | No chapter submission                                |
|  | Chapter events do not disturb classes                                     | April 1      |   | No chapter submission                                |
| Level II   | Chapter above the all-women's/all-men's average                           | April 1      |   | No chapter submission                                |
|  | Chapter Scholarship Plan  | October 1    |   | Documented scholarship plan                          |
|  | GPA Requirement for officers  | October 1    |   | Within the scholarship plan                          |
|  | Chapter policy on release of member requirements for an academic conflict | October 1    |   | Within the scholarship plan                          |
| Level III  | Academic Recognition Program  | October 1    |   | Within the scholarship plan                          |
|  | Chapter has interaction with VCU faculty                                  | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | No chapter members below a 2.0 GPA for 2 semesters                        | April 1      |   | No chapter submission                                |
|  | Chapter utilizes academic support services for chapter membership.        | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
| <b>Area 2: Membership Development and Education</b>            |   |              |   |  |
| Level I  | New Member and Member Development Plan                                    | September 1  |   | Submission of new member and member development plan |
|  |   | February 15  |   |  |
|  | Chapter initiates within 8 weeks of invitation to membership              | December 15  |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  |   | May 1        |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Academic excuse policy for new members                                    | September 15 |   | Within the new member plan                           |
|  |   | April 15     |   |  |
| Alcohol Free Social Event each semester                        | Fall  |              | Submission of social event registration form to the council |  |
|  | Spring  |              |   |  |
| Level II   | Chapter presents a chapter history program                                | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Chapter completed the following programs with 80% attendance              |              |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Hazing  | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Legal Liability an/or Risk Management                                     | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Sexism/Sexual Abuse/Gender Issues   | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Alcohol and Drug Use or Abuse   | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Diversity/Non-Discrimination  | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
|  | Participation in the Governing Council New Member Programming             | April 1      |   | Council will document                                |
| Level III  | New Members participate in a community service event                      | December 15  |   | Philanthropy/Service Report Form                     |
|  |   | May 1        |   |  |
|  | Retention of New Members at 80%   |              |   | No chapter submission                                |
|  | Retention of Members at 90%   | April 1      |   |  |
|  | Chapter communicates with parents or hosts a parent program               | March 15     |   | Submission of copy of materials                      |
|  | Chapter hosts a alumni/alumnae program                                    | April 1      |   | Program Report Form                                  |
|  | Chapter uses campus resources to assist in chapter programming            | April 1      |   | President Monthly Report Form                        |
| Chapter initiates within 4-6 weeks of invitation to membership | December 15   |              | President Monthly Report Form                               |  |
|  | May 1   |              | President Monthly Report Form                               |  |

### Area 3: Risk Management and Legal Liability

|           |  |           |  |                               |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|-------------------------------|
| Level I   | Chapter has no violations of University policy                                       | April 1   |  | No chapter submission         |
|           | Chapter has no violations of Governing Council policy and educated members on policy | April 1   |  | No chapter submission         |
|           |  | October 1 |  | President Monthly Report Form |
|           | Chapter completes a housing inspection (if applicable)                               | April 1   |  | No chapter submission         |
|           | Chapter has an internal judicial or standards board                                  | October 1 |  | Submission of copy of process |
|           | Chapter officers participate in council sponsored risk management training           | April 1   |  | No chapter submission         |
| Level II  | Chapter has no violations that result in a judicial hearing                          | April 1   |  | No chapter submission         |
|           | Chapter has a Crisis Management Plan   | October 1 |  | Submission of copy of plan    |
| Level III | Chapter maintains a positive relationship with the VCU Police                        | April 1   |  | President Monthly Report Form |

### Area 4: Leadership and Community Engagement

|   |  |         |                       |                               |  |
|---|--|---------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Level I   | 50% of chapter is involved in another VCU organization or activity                         | April 1 |                       | Membership involvement list   |  |
|   | Officers participate in all Council and Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life Programs    | April 1 |                       | No chapter submission         |  |
|   | Chapter participates in all council events   | April 1 |                       | No chapter submission         |  |
| Level II  | Participation in 4 VCU Events  | April 1 |                       | President Monthly Report Form |  |
|   | Event Name:  |         |                       |                               |  |
|   |  |         |                       |                               |  |
|   |  |         |                       |                               |  |
|   | Chapter sponsors an event with a chapter outside of the governing council                  | April 1 |                       | President Monthly Report Form |  |
| Chapter has membership on the governing council or honoraries | April 1  |         | No chapter submission |                               |  |
| Level III   | Chapter has non-member interaction outside of recruitment/intake                           | April 1 |                       | President Monthly Report Form |  |
|   | Chapter sponsors an event with a student organization that is not a fraternity or sorority | April 1 |                       | President Monthly Report Form |  |
|   | Chapter uses campus media outlets  | April 1 |                       | Submission of PR attempts     |  |

### Area 5: Community Service and Philanthropy

|           |   |             |  |                                  |
|-----------|---|-------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Level I   | Chapter has a community service and philanthropy chair                                  | October 1   |  | Officer Update Form              |
|           | Chapter will participate in 2 service events a year - 50% of members participate        | December 15 |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
|           |   | May 1       |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
|           | Chapter participates in community wide service events                                   | April 1     |  | No chapter submission            |
|           | Chapter raises \$200.00 for their national or local philanthropy organization           | April 1     |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
| Level II  | Chapter will participate in 2 service events a year - 50% of members participate        | December 15 |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
|           |   | May 1       |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
|           | Chapter participates in 2 other chapter's philanthropy events or service programs       | April 1     |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
|           |   | April 1     |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
| Level III | Chapter participates in a service event with a chapter outside of the governing council | April 1     |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |
|           | Chapter raises \$500.00 for their national or local philanthropy organization           | April 1     |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form |

### Area 6: Membership Recruitment/Intake Practices

|           |   |           |  |                                       |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Level I   | Chapter submits proper paperwork prior to intake or bid extension         | April 1   |  | Paperwork submission                  |
|           | Chapter only extends membership invitation to those academically eligible | April 1   |  | No chapter submission                 |
|           | All Recruitment and Intake Regulations are followed by the chapter        | April 1   |  | No chapter submission                 |
|           | Chapter has a Recruitment or Intake Officer                               | October 1 |  | Officer Report Form                   |
|           | Chapter recruitment/intake events are alcohol free                        | April 1   |  | No chapter submission                 |
| Level II  | Chapter provides a detailed report of membership requirements             | October 1 |  | Submission of membership requirements |
| Level III | Chapters holds intake/recruitment training                                | April 1   |  | President Monthly Report Form         |

### Area 7: Chapter Management

|           |  |                |  |   |
|-----------|--|----------------|--|---|
| Level I   | Completion of Special Provisions                                       | April 1        |  | Various documentation                         |
|           | Chapter pays council dues on time and in full                          | Set by Council |  | Council will document                         |
|           | Chapter has positive relationship with University Administration       | April 1        |  | No chapter submission                         |
|           | Chapter communicates with inter/national organization and volunteers   | April 1        |  | No chapter submission                         |
|           | Chapter has a business meeting at least every other week               | April 1        |  | President Monthly Report Form                 |
| Level II  | Chapter ratifies constitution and bylaws annually                      | April 1        |  | Submission of updated bylaws                  |
|           | Chapter develops annual chapter goals                                  | April 1        |  | Submission of chapter goals                   |
|           | Chapter submits proper IRS 990 Forms                                   | April 1        |  | Verification from advisor                     |
|           | Chapter has an annual budget   | October 1      |  | Submission of budget                          |
|           | Chapter utilizes external funding sources                              | April 1        |  | Philanthropy/Service Report Form              |
|           | Chapter has an officer transition retreat                              | April 1        |  | President Monthly Report Form                 |
|           | Chapter has a calendar of events                                       | October 1      |  | Submission of calendar                        |
| Level III | Chapter has a financial advisor or uses a financial management service | October 1      |  | Advisor Report Form or other                  |
|           | Financial Status Improvement   | April 1        |  | Verification from inter/national organization |