5YEARS
FORWARD

**Fraternity & Sorority Life
Strategic Plan
2021-2025
Bentley University**

5 YEARS FORWARD

VISION

By 2025, the Fraternity & Sorority Life Community (FSL or Greek Life) at Bentley University will:

- Foster a healthy community culture, enhancing safety, inclusion, and accountability within the community (Strategic Priority I).

- Provide a transformative personal experience to its members, prioritizing personal development, recruitment practices that demonstrate FSL's values and the value FSL offers, and the University's support for FSL's positive impact (Strategic Priority II).

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Strategic Priority I: Foster a Healthy Community Culture

FSL will create a culture that prioritizes safety, equity, and inclusion as core values of the community and demonstrates accountability for instances in which members and chapters engage in actions that contradict these values. These instances should be seen as the exception, not the norm. In addressing these areas for community improvement, Greek Life will be seen as a community that more closely lives by its values.

Goal A: Enhance Member Safety

Promote safety with a primary focus on addressing sexual violence and hazing behaviors and improving member understanding of reporting resources. Additionally, FSL will continue to educate members on issues of alcohol and other drugs, emotional well-being and mental health, and other risk management topics.

Objectives include:

1. Examine and acknowledge aspects of fraternity/sorority social event culture and Greek Life culture more generally that perpetuate sexism, sexual violence, and sexual harassment, and establish practices that address and these norms, perceptions, and beliefs and related behaviors. This may include but is not limited to establishing and revising policies, educational offerings, communication plans, use of new and existing assessment data, and other initiatives.

2. Maximize existing methods and create new methods for identifying, educating members about, preventing, and responding to hazing behaviors within the community. This not only includes improving new member awareness of resources and understanding of policies but also must require more of active members in identifying, perceiving as problematic, and dismantling harmful norms, beliefs, and "traditions" that perpetuate hazing culture.

3. Enhance member knowledge of ways to report alleged misconduct or concerns and other ways to respond to disclosures of students who have experienced misconduct and understand and address why students decide not to report the problematic behavior of others. This may include but is not limited to: increasing knowledge of report forms, campus resources, what campus staff are confidential resources versus what staff are responsible reporters, and off-campus resources, as well as increased trust-building and other initiatives that reflect a greater understanding of why students do not report concerns. This may also include exploring ways to improve reporting processes and the development of new, less formal ways to report concerns.

Goal B: Create a Culture of Equity and Inclusion

Promote equitable access to membership, leadership opportunities, sense of belonging, and the overall membership experiences of students with historically excluded identities, including but not limited to women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) students, LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) students, international students, low-income students, first-generation students, students with differing abilities/disabilities, and students from marginalized religious identities.

Objectives include:

1. Engage in a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of members who identify as women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) students, LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) students, international students, low-income students, first-generation students, students with differing abilities/disabilities, and students from marginalized religious identities.

2. Examine, acknowledge and address barriers to joining and being retained.

   These include but are not limited to historical realities and legacies of racism and exclusion, related perceptions, financial barriers, and other factors such as the use of inaccessible or exclusive terminology. Potential changes include but are not limited to the establishment of a dues scholarship fund, educational programming, and a community-wide audit of practices and culture.

3. Support new chapter expansion efforts for, and additional opportunities for membership in, historically Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous Peoples Greek letter organizations, and other culturally-based and identity-based Greek letter organizations for historically excluded social identities.

   This includes investing support and resources in existing city-wide chapters for which Bentley University is a member of the charter as well as exploring and supporting new city-wide and campus-based chapters based on student interests and needs. This also includes strengthening city-wide chapter connection to the Bentley campus and campus-based chapters. This further includes acknowledging the recent growth within the Panhellenic community and growing majority of women who make up Fraternity & Sorority Life and examining and increasing as needed the levels of support provided to the Panhellenic community.

4. Establish an FSL Inclusion & Belonging Council, comprised of diversity, equity, and inclusion officers from each chapter/council, to advance community priorities around inclusion and belonging in a student-driven, community-supported way.

   Work with chapters to ensure all organizations have a diversity, equity and inclusion officer position that is valued and responsibly selected by the organization and offers meaningful contributions to the organization.

5. Develop an inclusion agreement that must be completed by all existing members of Greek Life as well as all future new members of Greek Life and by members of the chapter who serve in leadership roles for the semester(s) in which they serve.

   This agreement would mirror the existing anti-hazing agreement and would include Bentley's Core Values, Greek Life's values and commitment to inclusion, what being an active bystander in situations of bias and harm looks like, and resources for reporting concerns.

6. Expand existing educational trainings on topics of social justice, identity, and inclusion.

   This may include but is not limited to: creating a more intentional connection between these issues and "brotherhood" and "sisterhood," ensuring training requirements for these topics mirror the standard required for risk management topics, addressing motivators to attend (what offerings are required, incentivized, and/or optional), identifying how regularly opportunities are provided and for whom they are intended, providing specific experiences focused on antiracist, anti-bias, and anti-sexism topics, offering opportunities that educate members on introductory content as well as those that focus on application of knowledge and bystander intervention, and open forums/discussions on current issues and community culture.

7. Engage in collaborations and philanthropic initiatives that reflect values of inclusion, partnering with campus offices, organizations, and other groups and causes that support equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Goal C: Consistently Demonstrate Accountability for Misconduct

Ensure there are processes and practices in place that provide appropriate levels of internal (chapter-managed) accountability for member misconduct and external (university-managed) accountability for chapter misconduct.

Objectives include:

1. Promote a culture that prioritizes addressing what are perceived as "less severe" instances of misconduct in order to interrupt and address harm and prevent behaviors from being normalized and leading to instances of more severe misconduct. Similarly, promote a culture that is less concerned about social media image or reputational concerns when it comes to alleged misconduct; ensure all chapters are focused on action steps and accountability, rather than image, and ensure how chapters present externally reflects internal culture. Third, a culture of internal accountability should also be an environment in which chapters "call each other out" and members from one organization respect and appreciate the intervention and concern of members of other organizations.

2. Create a set of judicial board best practices for use by chapters that do not have a track record of utilizing a judicial board to hold members accountable to chapter standards.

3. Partner with the Office of Student Conduct to improve member understanding of when an activity may be considered sponsored by an organization versus what is more likely to be considered individual misconduct, or both. This includes but is not limited to ensuring fraternities and sororities are held to the same Student Conduct standards as other student groups at Bentley.

4. Partner with Student Conduct to promote greater University transparency related to chapter organizational conduct histories, such as publishing information on the Bentley website. The goal here is to promote, for members of the community, transparency about concerning conduct histories and prevent all of Greek Life from being perceived as engaging in the same level of misconduct. This may include but is not limited to a consideration of the following: when to start publishing conduct histories and how far back historically to publish, what types of information to publish (allegation, finding, sanction, etc.), what cases would be included (reports versus findings of responsibility, those that result in a certain sanction, etc.), and how frequently these records are updated.

5. Achieve the perception and reality that Bentley holds fraternities and sororities to the same standards and promote a greater understanding of the situations in which fraternity and sororities are held to different standards. This includes but is not limited to standards related to: requirements under the FSL Standards program, the Student Conduct System, recruitment rules, etc.

Strategic Priority II: Provide a Transformative Personal Experience

FSL will move beyond being known primarily as an experience that offers social benefits to one that is also highly valued for prioritizing individual personal development, and FSL will recruit new members based on that transformative experience and reputation. These goals focus on the individual member experience and what is gained by membership in a fraternity or sorority and build on areas of inherent community strength. The ways in which Greek Life adds value to an individual's student experience will be demonstrated and known to others throughout the campus community.

Goal D: Facilitate Each Member's Personal Development

Provide an FSL experience that emphasizes the value added to each individual's personal development by participating in a fraternity and a sorority, as well as furthering initiatives that increase that value-add.

Objectives include:

1. Develop new opportunities for members to build leadership skills at Bentley.

   This includes but is not limited to opportunities that align with class year-based FSL membership trends (a students' first year traditionally being a year of joining; junior year being a year of active leadership role participation, etc.), experiences that balance depth of leadership development with breadth of number of students involved, required experiences for officer positions and optional opportunities for all members, as well as experiences that create a leadership trajectory for students from new members to future officers. Leadership experiences should demonstrate the competencies gained by participating in FSL at Bentley and should equip members to fully articulate and demonstrate the skills they have gained in future academic, co-curricular, and career endeavors. It is important to strengthen the robust existing leadership experiences offered by virtue of occupying a chapter leadership role; it is also vital to expand leadership development opportunities beyond positional experiences. This curriculum should also focus on social justice, including providing new opportunities for women to build confidence, assertiveness, leadership skills, and knowledge about their rights and the rights of their peers.
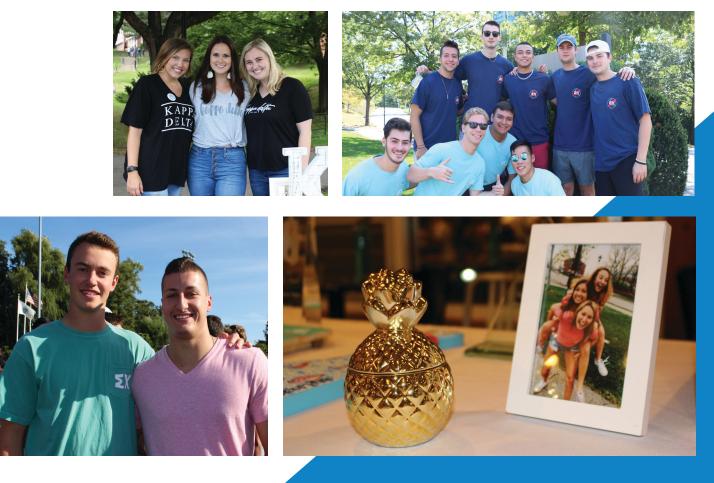
2. Explore opportunities for members to build leadership skills outside of Bentley. This may include but is not limited to conference attendance, webinar participation, and meetings with Greek Life student leaders from other campuses, as well as funding and resources to support these opportunities.

3. Ensure academic success continues to be at the forefront of the development and growth of FSL members. This may include but is not limited to: investigating the need for and impact of raising the minimum GPA for membership (whether for all new members, only E-Board members, etc.) and examining what is realistically needed to address new member academic concerns.

4. Advance the Greek Life membership experience in a way that allows chapters to better recruit "maybe joiners" and "never joiners." This includes but is not limited to: emphasizing benefits of membership that go beyond social opportunities to also include leadership, career, skill-building, service, and other more developmental elements of the FSL experience. This also includes doing more to expand these elements of the FSL experience so that was is promoted during recruitment is the reality of membership.

5. Shift the FSL Standards Program from a "requirements checklist" to a set of primarily developmental opportunities that are essential to chapter and member success and growth. This may include removing standards that are less essential or developmental and replacing them with those that support a transformative personal experience for FSL members. This may also include removing standards that are less essential but keeping non-developmental and essential compliance requirements, thus streamlining the program, and then achieving developmental goals in programs outside of Standards.

Goal E: Prioritize Recruitment Practices That Demonstrate FSL's Values and the Value FSL Offers

Ensure the value of the FSL experience and the FSL's values are centered during the recruitment process, in a way that consistently demonstrates both the kind of community FSL is and the types of individual benefits that membership offers.

Objectives include:

1. Implement strategies that address which benefits FSL talks about when recruiting potential new members and advance developmental benefits so that the experience FSL promotes is backed by the developmental experience FSL actually provides.

2. Broaden recruitment audiences and practices, so that recruitment is seen as a 365-day effort focused on all students (not exclusively first-year students or those students who have always known they want to join a fraternity/sorority, i.e. "always joiners"). This includes but is not limited to more active recruitment strategies, whereby the burden is on chapters to recruit, rather than on potential new members to be interested, and understanding why students choose not to join, through focus groups and other methods. Interest in joining needs to be seen as able to be developed, not static or a given.

3. Focus recruitment messaging and tactics on FSL's values of community and philanthropy.

Goal F: Improve Awareness of and University Support for FSL's Positive Impact

Provide avenues for stronger University-level support for the experience Greek Life provides and broader understanding of the success stories that come out of Greek Life.

Objectives include:

1. Improve awareness of Greek Life's contributions to the campus and community among all members of the Bentley community. This may include but is not limited to: population surveys about perceptions of Greek Life, engaging directly with key communities on campus, etc. (i.e. faculty, student organizations, etc.), and new marketing and branding initiatives for Fraternity & Sorority Life as a whole, councils, and chapters.

2. Ensure Fraternity & Sorority Life is appropriately represented among student leadership groups on campus. This includes but is not limited to employing strategies to ensure robust FSL membership in Student Government Association, Allocation & Internal Audit, Orientation Leaders, Resident Assistants, MOSAIC Ambassadors, Admissions student leadership roles, and other sought-after, visible, and connected student leadership groups.

3. Examine the extent to which the financial incentives offered by the FSL Standards Program are sufficient, or if other incentives are more valuable and sought after by chapters and members of FSL. Beyond the Standards program, better articulate what resources, and support members of FSL can expect from the University for their contributions to the community. As needed develop and allocate new University resources and forms of support for the FSL experience and the achievement of the goals contained in this plan.

4. Offer regular opportunities for members of Fraternity & Sorority Life to engage directly with University leadership and Student Affairs leadership.

5. Expand formal recognition and celebration opportunities for FSL successes, including creating Greek Life awards opportunities that go beyond the Chapter of the Year Award. This may include initiatives such as "Greek of the Week" or a dedicated, standalone, university-wide annual Greek Awards program.

Development of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan was collaboratively developed through a process led by the 2020 FSL Presidents Council, 2021 FSL Presidents Council, and Student Programs and Engagement. The process utilized themes gleaned from member surveys and other assessment data and a review of the national landscape and current and emerging issues in Fraternity & Sorority Life. The plan also included relevant recommendations from the 2020-2021 FSL Social Justice Working Group and monthly community conversations on racism in Greek Life, demands and requests from the @blackatbentley and @sexism.at.bentley social media initiatives, and elements that align with University racial and social justice initiatives and the University Strategic Plan. Student leadership, student voice, and stakeholder partnership were central to the development of the strategic plan through forums for feedback and input from students, campus partners, and chapter advisors.

FSL will successfully implement the strategic plan and its component parts by 2025, utilizing a variety of methods to market the plan, work toward established goals, and measure achievement of those goals.

Marketing of Strategic Plan

The plan will be published and communicated via the following methods beginning no later than fall 2021:

- Email communication introducing the plan to the full FSL community and regular email updates related to progress
- Annual opportunities for dialogue with the full FSL community about the plan and progress toward its goals
- Regularly updated web content related to the plan
- Visual advertisements to simplify the plan and capture the essence of the community's goals
- Sharing the plan with chapter headquarters staff, alumni advisors, and advisory boards
- Expanded communication with families

Achieving the Strategic Plan

Over the next five years, the Presidents Council and Student Programs & Engagement (SP&E) will be responsible for managing this plan and its strategic priorities, goals, and objectives. The Council and SP&E will pursue intended outcomes by working toward these goals together, making collaborative decisions about the specifics of each objective, engaging with community stakeholders, delegating action items to chapters and other councils, and regularly communicating with members about progress.

Measuring the Success of the Strategic Plan

The following new and existing assessment methods will be utilized to track progress and measure success of the goals contained in the plan. Future data will be compared with historical data and other information to quantify the extent to which goals have been achieved.

Perceptions and Experiences Data

- FSL experience survey each year, which measures experiences, norms, perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of resources and expectations

- Data that quantify the normalization of early intervention and proactive accountability as well as more traditional forms of accountability

- Data that demonstrate sense of belonging, access, and inclusion: why students join and are retained, why students do not join or resign their membership, etc.

Membership and Growth Data

- Data related to potential new members, new members (including shares of members who identify as "always joiners," "maybe joiners," and "never joiners") and diversity statistics each semester

- Number of new chapters established and membership data

- Recruitment and new member education survey each semester

Learning and Development Data

- Chapter and community grade reports each semester

- Training assessment data from leadership programs, risk management trainings, and diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops that demonstrate competency development, learning and growth

- Standards Report card each semester

- Program participation data, and related data that demonstrates learning and development

- Presence of new programs, initiatives, and partnerships and adjustments to existing programs, and related data that demonstrates learning and development

- Retention, graduation, and job placement reporting each year

Foster a Healthy Community Culture

- Enhance Member Safety

- Create a Culture of Equity and Inclusion

- Consistently Demonstrate Accountability for Misconduct

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- Facilitate Each Member's Personal Development

- Prioritize Recruitment Practices That Demonstrate FSL's Values and the Value FSL Offers

- Improve Awareness of and University Support for FSL's Positive Impact