

Comprehensive External Review: Phase 1
Executive Summary
California State University, San Luis Obispo
Fraternity and Sorority Life
Division of Student Affairs
2018

Juan R. Guardia, Ph.D.

At the request of Mr. Jason Mockford, Director of Leadership and Service at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly), an external review visit was conducted to review the Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) area in the Division of Student Affairs in light of the racially insensitive incident that occurred in April 2018. Dr. Juan R. Guardia, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at the University of Cincinnati served as the external consultant; he conducted a formal campus visit review (Phase 1) on June 7th and 8th, 2018. A follow-up visit (Phase 2) will be conducted during the Spring Quarter, in early April 2019.

The external consultant yielded five themes derived from the various data collection procedures, including document collection; focus groups and individual interviews with stakeholders: students, faculty, administration/staff, advisors, and parents; and department tour and observations. The five themes are (1) Lack of Diversity and Inclusion within Fraternity and Sorority Life; (2) Organizational Structure and Leadership; (3) Communication and Transparency; (4) Fiscal and Human Resources; and (5) Programming, Advisement, and Assessment.

Lack of diversity and inclusion within fraternity and sorority life highlighted how fraternity and sorority members should be educated on issues of race, ethnicity, privilege, and socioeconomic class. Organizational structure and leadership focused on how the FSL area needs to hire additional professional staff in order to accommodate the continually growing FSL community. Communication and transparency described the importance of developing a communication plan and protocols to support students if/when major incidents occur on campus. Fiscal and human resources discussed implementing a sustainable funding model for the FSL area. Programming, advisement, and assessment described the strong programming and advising emphasis on students and how the FSL area needs to establish quantitative and qualitative assessment plans for FSL signature programs and services.

The external consultant commends FSL on the ability to be flexible and adapt to the changing dynamics of campus climate, especially in light of the racially insensitive incidents that occurred since April 2018. The recommendations included in this executive summary are intended to assist FSL to become better equipped programmatically and organizationally to enhance services it provides its various constituents and to move to the next level of excellence. The included recommendations can also assist the FSL staff to better handle their responsibilities and challenges with balancing workloads. I believe that FSL has the opportunity to continually grow in a manner in which all parties including staff, faculty, students, and community constituents can collaborate on issues pressing to campus and societal needs while always remaining cognizant of their 'students first' mission.

Overall Recommendations

Short Term

1. FSL should incorporate diversity and inclusion programming into their current New Member Development Day and Greek Summit.
2. FSL should consider adding Pillar 6: Diversity and Inclusion to the Standards of Excellence Program. With the inclusion of the diversity and inclusion plans that were required in Spring 2018, now would be the opportune time to implement them for the 2018-2019 academic year.
3. FSL should increase collaborative opportunities with the Cross Cultural Centers (Gender Equity, MultiCultural, and PRIDE) for diversity and inclusion training programs and services. Currently, the Cross Cultural Centers do not have adequate staff to complete additional trainings. As such, they would need to add staff to support this and other Division training and advocacy initiatives.
4. As capacity and interest allows, FSL should collaborate with academic faculty who are experts in diversity and inclusion to facilitate conversations, workshops, and programs that would enhance FSL students development.
5. FSL should provide more collaborative programming opportunities for the three councils: IFC, PC, and USFC. One example is the establishment of an FSL Tri-Council, in which 3 members each of IFC, PC, and USFC are elected and meet bi-weekly to discuss items pertinent to all three councils and the overall Cal Poly FSL community. Another example would be establishing an FSL Programming Board; members of all three councils are responsible for programs and activities in which all council members can actively participate in. FSL Programming Board examples include: 1. University of Alabama (<https://ofsl.sa.ua.edu/leadership/greek-programing-board/>); 2. Colorado State University (<https://fsl.colostate.edu/programs/programming-board/>); and 3. Illinois Wesleyan University (<https://www.iwu.edu/greek-life/organizations/FSPB.html>).
6. FSL staff need professional development opportunities, on and off campus for diversity and inclusion training. On campus, the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan for Student Engagement and Well-Being, Goal 1 (n.d.) includes: "Collaborate with chief diversity officer and other campus partners to create a comprehensive diversity and inclusion training plan for faculty and staff." Off campus, conferences and institutes such as the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) and the Social Justice Training Institute (SJTI) are highly recommended, intense, diversity and inclusion training opportunities for student affairs professionals.
7. Develop a communication plan to include communication that is weekly, monthly, quarterly, and/or yearly for students, faculty, staff, community members, and advisors. Be strategic about what information needs to be shared or communicated publicly versus privately.

8. Consider establishing a communication response team to assist FSL staff with messaging in times of crisis. The communication response team should also properly train its members when immediate responses are required.
9. FSL should develop protocols and plans of action to support students if/when major incidents occur on campus (keeping FSL open after work hours to support students, partnership with Counseling Services, etc. are examples). Protocols should include other divisional staff and teams so that FSL are not the sole responders.
10. Review where and how staff are spending their time. The concept of “doing more with less” came up a number of times, so it is worth a review of where responsibilities fall, what are high impact practices, and where the gaps are in FSL programming and advising.
11. Continue to encourage self-care, work-life balance, and wellness. Leadership should model the way as well.
12. Consider putting an assessment plan in place for FSL signature programs and services.
13. Periodically assess FSL staff and student perceptions of the inclusivity of FSL’s work environment and space for students.
14. Chart out past efforts and accomplishments and future efforts to make FSL’s office space a more inclusive environment for students, faculty, staff, and community constituents.
15. Design qualitative assessments to capture narratives of students’ experiences in specific programs sponsored by FSL. In addition to the strengthening of soft skills, ask more questions about how FSL staff and program advisors have been a source of support related to sense of belonging, development of maturity, integrity, and leadership development.

Long Term

1. FSL should consider hiring an inaugural Director. This individual will bring the vision and experience much needed in this role. This individual should bring exceptional staff supervision skills, leadership experience, vast programming experience, and assessment and evaluation sorely needed for this office. An inaugural FSL Director would complement the current Dean of Students leadership and add another layer of experienced leadership and fresh lens to Cal Poly.
2. FSL should hire a third program coordinator to advise and work directly with the USFC.
3. Funding for an inaugural Director and/or a third program coordinator can come from a variety of sources, including:
 - a. Funding generated from the future P3 Fraternity and Sorority Life village can be directed for this position
 - b. Establishing an Endowed Position in partnership with the Cal Poly Foundation. One example of an endowed FSL position is the Cliff Alexander Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life at Miami University: <http://miamioh.edu/student-life/fraternity-sorority-life/index.html>

- c. Establish an assessment fee per fraternity and sorority member. Some examples include:
 - i. University of Arkansas: <https://uagreeks.uark.edu/greek-fee.php>
 - ii. North Carolina State: <https://fsl.dasa.ncsu.edu/greek-assessment/>
 - iii. Florida State: <https://ofsl.union.fsu.edu/moving-forward-together-plan>
- 4. The re-structure and re-alignment of the FSL organizational structure to include a Director, three program coordinators, and graduate assistants would better serve their needs and their student, faculty, staff, and community constituents. In California at UC and Cal State institutions, FSL offices majorly fall under a Student Leadership development office. Establishing an independent FSL office, that would report directly to the Dean of Students office, would demonstrate commitment from Student Affairs and Cal Poly that the FSL community is valued as an important part of the university tapestry. Some examples of FSL offices at public, similar size institutions that report to the Dean of Students include:
 - a. University of Kentucky: <http://www.uky.edu/greeklife/>
 - b. University of Virginia: <https://fsl.virginia.edu>
 - c. University of Oregon: <https://dos.uoregon.edu/fsl>
 - d. Washington State University: <https://gogreek.wsu.edu>
 - e. University of North Carolina at Charlotte: <https://greeklife.uncc.edu/about-us>
 - f. University of Missouri: <https://fsl.missouri.edu>
 - g. Sam Houston State University: <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/greeklife/>
 - h. Illinois State University: <https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/involvement/fraternal/>
- 5. FSL should consider formulating a strategic plan for the growth and longevity of the department that correlates with the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan for Student Engagement and Well Being 2017-2022 and President Armstrong’s Vision 2022.
- 6. The current location of the FSL office is less than ideal. The FSL office should consider relocating to a location that is closer to the heart of the Cal Poly campus. It is critical for the visibility and future growth of the office.
- 7. Implement a sustainable funding model for the department. If one-time funding is consistent and year-to-year, then this funding should be the baseline for FSL’s departmental budget but additional fiscal resources should be sought/requested.
- 8. Consideration should be given to institutionalizing programs and initiatives that benefit the entire university with substantial financial support if the expectation is to serve students, faculty, staff, and community constituents.
- 9. Document the models, theories, frameworks or other research that is foundational to how FSL develops its programs and services to address students across developmental levels. Take this information to develop a model that encompasses all of FSL’s work.

- 10.** Consider adding this model with a summary of how it works to the website and strategic plan.
- 11.** Design a long term qualitative assessment/research project that tracks fraternity and sorority students who interact with FSL from freshman to senior year. This type of assessment can inform FSL on what its current points of entry and exits are for students, which can highlight strengths and potential gaps in service or development.
- 12.** Analyze campus-wide and national assessments, surveys, and other reports that your assessment office has access to, to review and determine how it can translate to practice for students at FSL.