

DKE RHO LAMBDA LITERARY ASSOCIATION

Ad Hoc Steering Committee (OU Associate Chapter Effort)

Bob Tierno, Chairman

Dennis Clowers

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Report for January 2022 Board Meeting

On December 1, 2021, George Otey attended a Zoom webinar sponsored by Alpha Fraternity Management ("AFM") regarding post-COVID issues impacting Greek Housing. AFM has a relationship with Deke HQ and provides DKE and its other clients with strategies to improve housing and chapter culture. While a major focus is housing, **AFM also serves as a corporate and chapter development consultant.**

The HOUSING topics we may have to explore in the future with DKE National's housing team were addressed below:

1. BUILDING COSTS

Building costs for new construction and maintenance have increased by about 30% due to supply chain issues; this will impact the period for obtaining materials and building permits, which may be time sensitive based on projected completion dates; budgeting traditionally starts in January or February for the next year.

2. DINING TRENDS

Food costs have increased from between 3% and 5% since October 2021; this will impact menu designs, especially for budgeting with primary vendors and the use of credit cards for "emergency" purchases (need to explore cost savings by having members do kitchen cleaning, etc.); impact on menus, especially in meeting a) dietary restrictions (food allergies or religious) and b) "on demand" based on work schedules.

3. FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Facility management is becoming more of an issue with expectations for a high level of service, especially in cleaning, where occupants expect to be

provided less of a “room rental” but a “hospitality” situation). Increased levels of regulation can be expected regarding rental codes requiring “good, safe conditions.” COVID has increased sanitation awareness and the frequency of cleaning needed, but there’s less interest in members doing it and, instead, relying on a third party. That requires increased budgets for maids and cleaning supplies. There’s a need to identify and address these expectations with four groups: 1) alums- both local & national, 2) neighbors-other houses & the university, 3) parents, and 4) members. Parents are especially concerned with the quality of rooms and food service; members tend to focus on amenities such as internet service & study rooms.

4. DECLINING ALUMNI PARTICIPATION AND RECRUITMENT NEEDS

Reduced alumni participation has had an impact in general, not only on building upkeep but also on imparting a positive fraternity culture. It leads to more sophomores living in-house while upper-class members move into apartments, leaving key leadership roles to less mature members. Many houses have elections in September or May, resulting in a loss of corporate memory. To address these issues requires a commitment to a structural restart with 1) a strategic planning (goal setting) event at beginning of each semester, 2) a recruitment process guide, 3) officer transition training with an alumni adviser to help incoming officers to know their duties, benefit the culture, and keep more occupants, 4) with COVID, the challenge and opportunity present itself, how to restart the culture especially with such things as hosting philanthropy, a Mom’s/Dad’s weekend, how to plan an event – write the process down, keep it in a three-ring binder to pass down to the next office holder, explaining: what do we do, what’s the budget, how can we improve? With fewer alumni participating, they should use their knowledge not to perform the work but use a third-party group as “boots on the ground” and let the alums function as a true board to give guidance. Some alums are willing to serve if approached, but few are approached, so it is necessary to recruit in person. ***The situation is evolving into using professionals for recruiting and management services.*** We estimate that in the next 3-5 years, recruiting and management services professionals will increase due to a lack of alumni participation, affecting liabilities and cost-effectiveness.

5. HOUSING CORPORATION ISSUES

Housing corporations will face increasing pressures to fill the house and provide the right types of services while maintaining a good standing with

the school. They'll need to identify what services the members want, how the corporation fulfills them, and what additional connections need to be created. i.e., to get more members to use the house when they don't live there. House occupancy is a function of membership – generally, the membership level should be 2.5 times the number living in the house (25 beds need 80-100 members on campus). There's a need to emphasize that in-house living has a competitive advantage in social bonding, the quality of housing & food, mentoring, etc. There needs to be a written agreement with the Chapter and housing corporation to ensure payment to the housing corporation if a member doesn't live in the house (for example, a membership agreement to live in the house for 1-2 years but if not living there a pro-rata payment to make up rent, or perhaps a 2-year lease with an opt-out clause once the house is full. Note: if the house is not full, the housing corporation needs to make up the difference; look at least one year ahead when budgeting for that.

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Occupancy guidelines interrelate with the fraternity's policies and procedures; it needs to continue policies based on good experiences, such as 1) lowered rent has proved to be unsuccessful; 2) all officers should live in the house (if not living in the house, then they should resign or accept automatic resignation); 3) elections should be held in November to ensure corporate memory; 4) manage officer selection before signing leases (should this be placed in the bylaws?); 5) plan recruitment classes with a minimum target number tied to house capacity; 6) ensure value is added, and the cost is efficient with cleaning services, cable/wifi, and access to groceries. What commitment should be made to live in the house? Exemptions?

7. STAFFING

More scrutiny is applied to fraternity living situations where behavior issues and student code infractions occur. The presence of resident advisers (house mothers, house fathers, graduate students) is evolving, and staffing needs are costly (house mothers generally cost \$50-\$60K/year). This issue is of major importance since incidents of hazing, alcohol and drug abuse, and Title IX violations are less likely to occur with a live-in adviser present. Complex issues include labor law issues, developing a job description, and monitoring the adviser (performance reviews, monthly expectations, and one-page follow-up reports to the house corporation board). Only 30% of frats now have live-in advisers.