

September 27, 2018

Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity  
672 N. High St.  
Morgantown, WV 26505

Dear Members of Phi Sigma Kappa:

On Saturday, September 22, 2018, the Executive Director of your national organization stated that your local chapter was “disassociating” from West Virginia University. Your chapter explained that it no longer wanted to be formally recognized by the University as a student organization. In doing so, your organization also indicated that it did not wish to comply with the policies and procedures that the University established to promote a safe and meaningful experience for our students.

In the spring semester of 2018, the University had received reports of drug and alcohol abuse, physical altercations, over occupancy at events, disorderly misconduct, sexual misconduct and hazing. It was critical that we addressed these concerns immediately. As a result, in February, we formed a working group to redefine Fraternity and Sorority Life on campus. This working group consisted of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and fraternity and sorority headquarters partners.

The working group reviewed each chapter’s academic, discipline, and community engagement history anonymously. The committee made recommendations to the Dean of Students, who accepted these recommendations. Each organization then had the opportunity to appeal to the Provost. Your organization did engage in the appeal process.

Your chapter has indicated that it is dissatisfied with the deliberate – and necessary – steps the University took this past spring to promote Fraternity and Sorority Life on the University’s campus as safe and aligned with our University values.

In its anonymous review of your organization’s record, the working group learned that your chapter had been found responsible for 13 different violations of the Student Code of Conduct within the past three years. These charges ranged from hazing, physical altercations with another chapter, destruction of property and violations of social event policies.

The working group recommended that your chapter be suspended for a period of three academic years.

Furthermore, since April 2018, your chapter has three charges pending with the Office of Student Conduct. Specifically, your chapter has been charged with violations associated with an alcohol transport of a new member to the hospital, intimidation of a parking authority professional by throwing glass bottles and other objects at him and using racial slurs, and yet another altercation with another fraternity. Despite several attempts to proceed with adjudications of these charges through the Student Conduct process, your chapter has refused to participate.

By dissociating with pending charges before Student Conduct, your chapter would not have been eligible for full reinstatement until such matters were resolved through the Student Conduct process. Your chapter will be identified as being “dissociated subject to ongoing conduct-related sanctions.” Furthermore, the University will pursue the pending charges and any other recent policy violations (e.g., violating the deferred membership policy) against the student leaders who were responsible for chapter at the time of the conduct.

Moreover, your organization has recently expressed its dissatisfaction with the University’s deferred recruitment policy, which prohibits freshmen from joining a fraternity until the Spring semester. We do this to give our freshmen time to acclimate to college life. This policy was not a new initiative, but rather has been in existence since 2015.

Notably, in the Fall 2017 semester, your new member class had an average semester GPA of 1.52. Your chapter had a 2.56 average during that same semester. In the Spring 2018 semester, your new members had an average 2.38 GPA and the chapter was at a 2.55.

Over the last several weeks, we have attempted to discuss your dissatisfaction and to find a reasonable path forward for your organization to remain associated at the University. In response, you have engaged in active recruitment of freshmen in direct defiance to University regulations and protocols. Furthermore, your chapter has been cited by law enforcement 2 times since the start of the fall semester for activities ranging from loud nuisance parties to an underage citation at an unregistered social event.

It is very disappointing that you have elected to follow this path of disassociation. In our quest to advance Fraternity and Sorority life at the local and national level, institutional support is paramount should any group wish to remain a *collegiate* organization.

Since Phi Sigma Kappa has proceeded with its disassociation, the University will, at minimum, take the following actions:

- Prohibit the chapter from applying to be formally recognized by the University for a period of at least 10 years.
- Continually notify all students and parents that your chapter is not recognized by the University and strongly discourage students from joining your chapter.
- Strongly encourage other recognized student organizations not to engage in social interactions with your chapter.
- Encourage the Collegiate Panhellenic Association to follow the National Panhellenic Conference Unanimous Agreement (2013) which prohibits recognized Panhellenic organizations from associating with non-University recognized fraternities in an organizational capacity who do not hold University recognition due to matters of student conduct

- Pursue appropriate violations of the University’s Student Conduct of Code against individual members of the chapter for recent or pending violations of the Code and University policies.
- Indicate on the University’s website that your chapter has “disassociated subject to ongoing conduct-related sanctions.
- Prohibit the chapter from using “West Virginia University” or use any of the institution’s marks or brands in any capacity.
- Prohibit the chapter from holding itself out as being associated or recognized by the University in any way, particularly to any potential new members.
- Prohibit the chapter from using University resources or facilities for programming or business purposes.
- Prohibit the chapter from participating in the Interfraternity Council or any of its sponsored programs, including: recruitment/rush; recognized new member education/intake; and educational workshops focused on risk management, recruitment, and chapter operations.
- Prohibit the chapter from participating in programs sponsored by the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life and/or other WVU departments, such as: Homecoming; Greek Week; being advertised for membership intake/formal communication to potential new members; and receiving grade reports and other membership data points.
- Prohibit the chapter from participating as a fraternity in any activity sponsored by a recognized student organization for recognized student organizations, such as: social functions with IFC, NPHC, and Panhellenic organizations; utilizing resources provided by the Department of Student Engagement & Leadership; and receiving funding from the Student Government Association.

Finally, even though your organization has chosen to no longer be associated with the University, as members, you are still WVU students. Students must still adhere to the Student Conduct Code and in accordance with the Student Conduct Code process, will be held individually accountable for any future violations of that Code. Moreover, students could be subject to civil and criminal liability for any actions they take that violate local, state or federal law.

Again, we are disappointed and concerned by the decision to disassociate from the University. We hope that the chapter leadership has carefully considered the impact not being associated with the University will have on the chapter and its membership — particularly at a local level. If you have any questions, I am happy to discuss further with your chapter or arrange for your chapter to meet with President Gee.

Sincerely,

Corey Farris, Dean of Students  
West Virginia University

cc: Parents of Members of Delta Chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity  
Known Alumni of Delta Chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity