

## MEETING WITH INTERFRATERNITY PRESIDENTS

October 12, 2017 at 3:30pm

### Attendance

- Mark Rosenberg (President)
- Breny DaParre Garcia (Associate Vice President, Institutional Relations)
- Peter Hernandez (IFC President; Brother of Pi Kappa Phi)
- Michael Cooper (Former Interim IFC President; Brother of Theta Chi)
- Alex Castillo (President, Beta Theta Pi)
- Miled Finianos (President, Lambda Chi Alpha)
- Manny Gonzalez (President, Phi Delta Theta)
- Carlos Coello (President, Pi Kappa Phi)
- Patrick Wright (President, Sigma Alpha Mu)
- Gabriel Arce (Brother, Sigma Chi)
- Matt Sabates (President, Sigma Phi Epsilon)
- Hiram Duarte (President, Tau Kappa Epsilon)
- Michael Dibono (President, Theta Chi)
- Mikey Berlfein (President, Zeta Beta Tau)

### Opening Comments

Dr. Rosenberg started the conversation with how he frames his perspective on Greek Life at FIU:

- There is a difference between rights and responsibilities.
- He was a member of ZBT, his sisters and brother were affiliated, his mom was a sorority house-mother, and both his children were affiliated - so he has great respect for the value sororities and fraternities can offer its members.
- However, as president of FIU, he has fiduciary responsibilities - as do chapter presidents - over his constituents.
- He recalled one day when he was interim president in 1999, and he was flying home from DC, that he realized the immense responsibility he had while leading the institution.

### General Thoughts

- After asking about attendance at the anti-hazing town hall (more on final page), Dr. Rosenberg kicked off the conversation on the topic of hazing. He raised his concerns with the unconscionable behavior at Penn State - the impetus for the town hall. He shared with the men that if they are not willing to address such incidents in their chapters then they shouldn't be president.
- As with the Panhellenic women, Dr. Rosenberg shared his concerns about dual discourse. He shared the story of Kendall Berry's death and if only one bystander would have tried to be a peacemaker, he might still be alive. He urged the men to "stand tall and do the right thing" when they see poor/risky behavior.

- One president shared his belief that he has seen a “decline in the quality of chapters” over the last few years, and another added that what is happening on campus is “unprecedented.”
- The topic of culture was raised by several presidents, specifically how “there is no incentive for good behavior when there is no real punishment for bad behavior” and how the university just “treats the symptoms (chapters) and not the disease (culture).”
  - Dr. Rosenberg shared that the sum total of members’ behaviors does create culture, but what organizations condone also creates that culture.
  - Dr. Garcia added and acknowledged that alumni engagement can also cause challenges when active members must sometimes compete with their own values and the pressures of former leaders (most of the group profusely agreed with my perspective).
  - Dr. Rosenberg added that to lead with integrity, they cannot continue to benchmark against the lowest common denominator – otherwise, we’re all in trouble. In the end, he only sees FIU students and doesn’t matter if it’s a fraternity doing wrong; to him, it’s the students failing to meet the university’s code of conduct.
- Dr. Rosenberg read to them from the code of conduct, namely:
  - *Sexual Misconduct - 2* - Obscene or indecent behavior, which includes, but is not limited to, exposure of one’s sexual organs or the display of sexual behavior that would reasonably be offensive to others. Other forms of obscene or indecent behavior include sexual exhibitionism, prostitution or the solicitation of a prostitute, peeping or other voyeurism (video or otherwise), and going beyond the boundaries of consent, e.g., by allowing others to view consensual sex or the nonconsensual video or audio taping of sexual activity.
  - *Principles of Group Responsibility* - Any Student Organization can be held responsible for its actions or the actions of a collection of its members acting together.
- One president shared that his greatest fear is that these minor (and seemingly “dismissed”) incidents will continue to yield poor behavior, and something terrible will actually happen. Another president agreed and ask where the line was.
  - Dr. Rosenberg shared that he is no longer standing by on this topic, and is working to define those lines.
- Dr. Rosenberg offered the TKE president time to share any thoughts he had for the group. Hiram urged the other presidents to “be strict”, because things can “fall through the cracks” and is hard to realize what “will land on your shoulders.”

### Comments Related to Process / Administration

- When Dr. Rosenberg asked why so few men were in attendance at the anti-hazing town hall. One president shared that FSL personnel invited chapter e-boards and new members only, so since recruitment was postponed because of the hurricane, there weren't many men required to attend.
- Throughout the discussion on quality and culture (see above) several members shared their frustrations with the inconsistency of sanctions by FSL and SCCR. They all shared several examples over the last few years (specifically calling out the actions of each other's organizations at the meeting) where they felt the administration did not act at all, did not act timely enough, did not act strictly enough, or acted too harshly/unfairly. Overall, they felt there is great "imbalance" and poor communication in the process.
- During the above conversation, they also shared their frustration around the lack of information/transparency around incidents.
  - While Dr. Garcia did share that the conduct process is confidential so they would be unable to get timely or detailed information, she asked for clarification on the topic to gauge what the core issue was.
  - They all felt that outcomes should be shared with all chapter leaders – because this would help control the rumors spread across and assumptions made by the community.
- One president shared that while he was thankful for the invitation to speak with Dr. Rosenberg, most of the men will be ending their terms as president in the next few weeks. He urged Dr. Rosenberg to be more proactive and have these meetings with future leaders (he proposed once each term).
- As a follow up to the prior comment, one president felt that this meeting wasn't about campus culture, but about the administration's "inaction over the years that finally reached [Dr. Rosenberg]," and hence not necessarily requiring follow up with the students.
- Another president shared that they continuously feel dismissed / ignored when they do try to talk to Student Affairs staff about their concerns.