Opportunities for Fraternity/Sorority Life & Student Conduct
Partnership Building in Virtual Settings
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A global pandemic brings many changes to the traditional structures of higher education, including developing remote models of student engagement and accountability. As physical access to sharing information becomes impossible, solidifying a partnership between FSL staff and student conduct (SC) staff becomes more important than ever before. Although daunting, this distance from shared campus spaces should be a motivator to either build or strengthen FSL and SC partnerships. By building and strengthening these partnerships and developing joint goals now, these offices can use the physical distance away from campus to create proactive education, ensure investigations continue smoothly, and solidify practices to continue upon campus re-openings.

**Partnership Building through Consistent Virtual Check-Ins**
If the FSL and SC offices do not already have a standing meeting for regular check-ins regarding FSL organization student conduct, consider using this remote time to establish these meetings as a common practice. Allotting consistent time to meet creates a space designed to build rapport between the two offices. Additionally, this routine prioritizes time to track and address ongoing, and recently closed investigations, and introduce concerns that could develop into policy violations in order to inform and inspire proactive planning to address these concerns. Coordinating this meeting between all members of the FSL and SC staffs allows for a further breadth of information being shared, as different roles in each office play a different part in connecting with these student groups. Additionally, inviting all of these perspectives to this space could create a more holistic overview of the strengths and areas of growth for both student organization behavior and for the FSL and SC team as a professional staff fulfilling job expectations. Even if there are no current FSL conduct concerns or investigations, these meetings allow for proactive partnership support that can continue beyond these remote times.

These meetings can also provide the knowledge needed for FSL staff to form consistent conduct check-ins with headquarters (HQ) staff, allowing FSL to share both positive and concerning updates with HQ without being prompted by an investigation or a more urgent need. Notably, however, this foundation first relies on SC’s ability to be forthcoming and collaborative with the information they share with FSL. Although this may seem like over communication, providing this information can create a foundation of solidified partnership to build upon in addressing trends and educational measures for a chapter collaboratively with an HQ.
Partnership Building through Virtual Investigation Models

Even if students are not physically together, policy violations may still occur. Shifting to a remote and virtual investigation may require a complete reexamination of a campus’ investigation policies and procedures. Informing stakeholders of these updated investigation models can aid in creating an environment where miscommunication is less likely, and the students can feel supported throughout the process without any confusion from the staff members guiding the investigation.

SC professionals should be asking the following questions: What do my FSL campus partners need to know about this investigation? How can I communicate this information clearly in a remote model? How will our staff ensure stakeholders stay informed of and supported through investigation model updates, and how can I provide context necessary to explain why these updates were made? What do I need to share with students partaking in this investigation regarding the technological platforms, recording abilities, FERPA requirements, having advisors present, and setting expectations regarding the investigation timeline? Most importantly, how will I continue to follow up with all of these partners to ensure the investigation continues smoothly despite the physical distance, new technology, and potential new procedures put into place?

These questions set the tone for all staff and stakeholders involved in an investigation and thoughtful answers to these questions allow each party to continue fulfilling their expectations during an investigation. Creating a document detailing the timeline of the investigation, specific roles of each campus and off-campus HQ partner, and the logistics of each of these roles can provide guidance and ensure all parties remain in sync throughout the investigation, even when navigating the newness of it all.

Partnership Building through Virtual Cross-Campus and National Resources

Universities moving to remote models may allow for more time for collaboration with cross-campus partners as time spent on student interaction lessens. Drawing on the knowledge of peers in other areas of the country or at institutions with other university models allows for growth in understanding alternative ways to use remote tools to accomplish the shared goals of FSL and SC offices. Additionally, these cross-campus conversations can help in beginning to track the development of potential trends as organizations move towards models where students are self-isolating but still wanting to further chapter goals, like new member processes.

An opportunity for growth for FSL and SC staff may be prioritizing sharing of communications from inter/national and professional organization, even when we return to an in-person model.
Sharing articles, online community groups, or national organization-sponsored resources with not only an individual’s direct co-workers, but those in the offices they closely collaborate with can lead to a moment of understanding. Each office can learn what topics the other prioritizes in line with their work, and more importantly, why these are topics of priority.

Although this period can feel isolating, these times of remote connectivity can create new habits of partnership between FSL and SC offices. Prioritizing the creation or strengthening of these partner-driven habits in this atypical period of a global pandemic can create a solidified routine for campus partners to fully utilize when campuses return to a physical model.

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