

Partnership, Courage, and Interfraternalism

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Attempting to write about interfraternalism in under 1000 words is a significant challenge. Amidst a climate of significant polarization, tragedy, and an evolving student population, our work must continue to challenge convention and conviction. It is within this context that interfraternalism has become increasingly important to the success and survival of the fraternal industry.

Conversations throughout the industry often revolve around incidents, investigations, and/or the structural response to an issue. Rarely do conversations focus on the partnerships and people tasked with addressing the issues. We often overlook the emotional, professional and human capital required to address complex social and organizational issues. Professionals, alumni/ae, volunteers, and student leaders are in this together, and we are the leaders who must find solutions, recruit partners, and come together to challenge systems and mental models which no longer serve the student experience or the fraternal movement.

Within the fraternal and higher education industry, we have colleagues from all areas of expertise seeking to contribute a portion of the larger solution. Collaboration is essential in meeting the multifaceted needs and demands of our industry. We need to be willing to engage our partners in the alumni associations to engage, educate, and recruit volunteers. We need to work with partners in residential life to train student leaders, improve the student housing experience, and develop facility management models that ensure the long term sustainability and accountability for fraternity and sorority housing. We must have the humility and courage to ask for help, confidence in the abilities and expertise of others, and the belief that we are stronger together than on our own.

Interfraternalism requires courageous leadership and professionals that are willing to pursue the greatest challenges. In recent years, colleagues of the highest caliber have stepped to the forefront and sought out the difficult task of redefining the fraternal movement, and we too must engage courageously in the difficult process of restoring and advancing the fraternal industry. This will challenge how we address health and safety issues, how we redefine the lifecycle of chapter, and how we support our peers and colleagues professionally and emotionally. We need to embrace the reality of our limitations, invest in strategic and sustainable change initiatives, and empower stakeholders at all levels to be a part of the solution.

Interfraternalism is imperfect. It requires us to acknowledge our past, accept our current realities, and invest in a better future. It's about forgiveness, humility, partnership, collaboration, courage, and innovation. I know I've been on the wrong end of things more than once and will likely be again. At the end of the day we must remember, our commonalities far surpass our differences; our collective might is far greater than individual talents; and our potential for success is far greater when we work together. If we can do those things every day as interfraternal partners, then we've done our job.