

From the Desk of The President Elect

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I am truly humbled to serve as the 2017 and 2018 Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors (AFA) President. I personally thank those who supported me, and I look forward to working with all of you. As I prepare for my term and our time together at the Annual Meeting, I have given much thought to the future of the Association. I have shared some of these thoughts below.

What Has Prepared Me For This Role?

As I look ahead to where I am going, it is important to reflect on the experiences and education that have prepared me to serve in this role. I have been a member of AFA since 2001. I participated as an engaged member of the AFA volunteer corps from 2002 until today. My professional role has been 100% fraternity and sorority life since my graduate school assistantship in 2001-2003. While I consider myself a middle-manager in terms of supervisory responsibilities, I am still very much on the front lines working with fraternity and sorority members daily (and on nights and weekends). In this way, I have a strong understanding of the campus based professional experience. I also serve as an executive council member for my own sorority, Sigma Sigma Sigma. I served on the Northeast Greek Leadership Association (NGLA) Board of Directors for 8 years. I am currently a doctoral candidate in a Higher Education Leadership program at Colorado State University. This array of experience positions me well to serve our association. I am also truly conscious of the experiences I do not have, and I believe I gain from the experience and perspective of other Board members who bring different ideas and thoughts to our conversations – as well as other Association members. For those who are strengths-based, my top five strengths are: empathy, developer, harmony, discipline, and responsibility.

What Will Our Successes and Challenges Be in This New Year?

As we often tell our students, their role is to leave their organization in a better place than they found it. I, too, hope to do good work over these next two years to propel our association into even more success. I recognize the excellent efforts of my predecessors to get us to where we are today. Particularly as we approach the significant milestone of the Association's 40th anniversary, I think we can take time to celebrate our successes but also chart a bright path for the next 10, 20, and 30 years.

During my tenure, I will take substantial action on the strategic initiatives that have been in development over the past few years. We have great ideas contributed. I am hopeful to see increased execution. These areas are educational resources, communications, research and development, and efficient operations. More specifically, I would like to see a mentoring program developed for newer professionals, and I would like to learn more information about the experience of our profession in order to best identify and assess our needs. This will continue to come to us through our own AFA research and hopefully the research we ourselves do as scholar/practitioners. I want AFA to become a great clearinghouse of resources so we do

not have to email each other every time we are looking for best practices or benchmarking, though I value we have such good relationships we can do that. And I want to offer even more professional development experiences and opportunities to our members – at all levels – whether they be virtual, in conjunction with other groups, or stand-alone.

I want to be a leader who gains the respect of our partners and constituents. I think of myself as warm and approachable, and I want to participate in the dialogue about our profession, our passion, and our students. Resources, whether they be financial, human, or simply time, are always a challenge. Additionally, there are often larger issues that arise that can take our eyes off our goals. I aspire to remain steadfastly moving forward with our initiatives and ideas and with our Association.

What Will My Legacy Be?

I would like to be remembered as someone who gave her all to AFA, was willing to listen to the thoughts of members, helped create new initiatives that would greatly impact our lives as professionals and volunteers, represented our organization well when we get a seat at the table, and led an organization that members were proud to join. I genuinely hope we cause a trickle-down effect. We all have touchpoints with students in a variety of capacities. Our work done well helps their experience become even better. Similarly, more experienced professionals having authentic interactions with newer professionals has a ripple effect. I want to see those relationships succeed even more as a result of my legacy.

I am a person who is observant, intuitive, and takes time to process. I am a person who is crazy about my Chihuahua. I am a person who does not know all the answers but will do everything I am able to seek the best solutions and make sound decisions. I am a person. I come to this role with a sense of humility. I like to surround myself with others who can empower me to be my best.

What Does the Future of Fraternity and Sorority Life Hold?

The changing dynamics of higher education certainly have an impact on the future of fraternities and sororities. Rising student debt, mental health issues, sexual assault on campus, climates that do not foster inclusion, continuing challenges with alcohol and hazing, and general safety on campus are all real and concerning. Staying relevant by offering students a meaningful experience is something we continue to wrestle with...our organizations have endured but much has changed since many of the earliest fraternities and sororities were founded. The opportunity to be a sorority woman has offered me tremendous personal development, and I do not think that impact will diminish. We may need to offer additional, innovative ways for students to experience fraternity and sorority. As we do so, please know that I am a true advocate for the experience and I stand with all of you in our work to continue to deliver a positive and value-added experience in what we call fraternity and sorority.