

## **A Reflection from the Current AFA President**

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In my nearly 12 years of working in higher education, I've had the honor and pleasure of working with a variety of student populations. I have learned from the students just as much as they learned from my advising them. I learned quickly that achieving the outcomes and goals of the institution and the department would not be possible without forging necessary partnerships on campus. I took this same philosophy into my role as President of AFA. Without successful and intentional partnerships with our counterparts in the fraternal industry and in higher education overall, neither party would be as successful as it could be. Our collective ability to advance our organizations relies on the continuation of us working together. I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge the wonderful mentors who have guided me along the way. I've been fortunate enough to have those in my corner who have spoken into existence opportunities that I myself didn't realize would come to fruition, including becoming President of AFA! Their belief in me is something I don't take for granted. I count it an honor and privilege to have volunteered for this Association in such a way.

### **Leaving a Legacy**

I would like to leave a legacy of servant leadership. I would hope those who serve after me will have the best interest of our members, partners, and the industry at the forefront rather than their own. It is important to invest in the future leaders of our Association. We have to think about who will follow in our footsteps and carry the torch. A mentor of mine once told me that in thinking about the future of our Association, she would always strategize on who was next in the pipeline. She would often tell me, "it is your time." I didn't understand what she meant at every mention of that phrase to me, but as I end my term of President, it is as clear as day. I would leave a message to those who follow and say "make the Association better for others than it was for you."

There have been a lot of successes I have seen in my tenure, including:

- The newly revamped Strategic Framework of the Association was initiated and from it grew the Strategic Framework Workgroups. The creation of these workgroups allowed for a number of AFA members to volunteer their time providing direction and recommendations for the Board of Director's consideration in enhancing the offerings and resources provided by the Association.
- The Title IX conference was created allowing for professionals to discuss law and best practices around the subject matter of sexual assault awareness and prevention.

- The First 90 Days program was totally revamped and the unveiling of a newly structured program was presented to the membership. The feedback from participants in this new program is very positive.
- The Association staff grew in size adding the position of Assistant Executive Director and the Director of Research and Assessment.

I would say the biggest challenge in my tenure was the legislative conversation around Fair and Safe Campus. It was one of the most divisive topics our industry has faced. After the unveiling of the proposed bill, a lot of discourse was had between industry partners to better understand each other's perspective. It is my wish that in the future, the discourse would occur prior to public discussion as more would be achieved and understood that way.

### **Looking to the Future**

I believe the future for fraternity and sorority is dependent upon our acceptance of change. As an industry, we have hit a point that if change doesn't happen, some organizations will remain stagnant and others will cease to exist. If change doesn't happen on campuses, we will see an increased number of cases involving risky behavior. We will find the development of students who are members of fraternities and sororities dampened by a lackluster experience which has lost all ability to be rooted in values. I believe those who care about the advancement of fraternity and sorority see and want more. As professionals working with fraternities and sororities, our potential is so great. We have the ability to think beyond affiliation and focus more on the individual leadership development of men and women nationwide. Collectively, we can tackle tough issues and influence those who are the decision makers within our organizations, the government, and society, but we have to do so without selfish intent. Some may hear the aforementioned and believe it is very lofty and unattainable. I hear it and think to myself, "there is great work to be done."