

## Fraternal Values Society: Return on Investment

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Professionals often spend significant time focusing on guiding students in maximizing their on-site leadership institute experiences at times missing the opportunity to balance that message with the importance of post-experience action and implementation. Perhaps this focus on maximizing the on-site experience is financially motivated. After all, not all fraternity/sorority affairs budgets are created equally, and it often takes a village just to make these opportunities a reality. It takes students completing scholarship applications, councils buying-in, and generous student affairs colleagues who are willing to share their end-of-the-year budget. For most campuses securing the funding for student attendance is a huge win.

The “funding process” feels worthwhile when the students return to campus and have a renewed sense of personal purpose and/or vision for the fraternity/sorority community. However, the number of students who attend sessions and have phenomenal experiences matters little if there is no post-experience return on investment. At Elmhurst College, the return on investment begins before the students attend their summer session. The campus applications, interviews, and orientation sessions reiterate the student’s place of importance within the fraternity/sorority community. Prior to attending a leadership institute, the students agree to join a cohort of members who have also participated in enhanced learning experiences, the Fraternity Values Society.

The Fraternal Values Society supports this group of students by serving as a network of support and accountability. The Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values (AFLV) created this program for students who have a passion for making sure that the dreams of their founders are at the forefront of their fraternity/sorority experience. They are the movers and shakers of the community: Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute graduates, AFLV LeaderShape graduates, AFLV Central participants, and those who have excitement for living their fraternal values. At Elmhurst College, the Fraternal Values Society has provided an effective “next step” for students returning from a leadership experience, where they can draw from the experience and advice of peers, instead of solely relying on advisors. This model can be replicated at other campuses, both with and without a chapter of the Fraternal Values Society.

At Elmhurst College, when students return from their summer leadership experiences, they complete a “values-in-action contract.” The contract provides a space for personal reflection and specific steps for action. The students share their contracts and provide regular updates with the other members of the Fraternal Values Society. Additionally, the students facilitate internal and external workshops and open forums based on topics of interest.

When these individuals come together as Fraternal Values Society initiates they are provided with a space where members are not bound by position titles, number of years initiated, or a checklist of specific in-the-box expectations. In this space members decide what is important and how to take action. There are no boundaries.

The Fraternal Values Society provides a space for student-led initiatives and a community-wide philosophy that challenges members to keep their values moving forward. Not only are our members more aligned with their chapter values but also the values of our fraternity/sorority community. By creating this campus wide community network, Elmhurst College has a shared space to celebrate the values that transcend the individual organizations and summer leadership experiences.

