

2015 Business Meeting Opening Statement

Given by: Veronica Moore, President

Many AFA Members in the last several months, and many more in the last three days here at the Annual Meeting, have questioned why the leadership of the Association has not been more outspoken regarding the Safe and Fair Campus acts. I want to take an opportunity to address those questions directly.

Last December, our board issued a statement indicating we did not endorse many of the ideas and proposals that eventually found their way into the bills. That statement was subsequently endorsed by NASPA, ASCA, and several other higher education associations.

Once the bills were introduced in Congress this August, we immediately expressed our concerns to the leadership of NIC and NPC. We issued a second statement in September stating we were continuing our efforts to work with our partner higher education associations to advocate and advance our position on these issues.

We invited a national Title IX expert, Dr. John Lowery, to present an Advance U webinar related to these legislative proposals, providing valuable education to our members who were being questioned about these bills. We have engaged in countless conversations with a variety of higher education and interfraternal partners regarding our concerns with the bills.

Some have questioned why we did not issue additional statements, or stronger statements, reemphasizing our opposition to these bills and condemning those who brought these bills forward. The answer to that question is simple – statements written solely for the purpose of doing so would have accomplished little in terms of advancing our position. The cost of issuing those statements would have been to drive a wedge between us and our interfraternal partners at a time when it was crucial that we be able to work together to address the challenges we currently face as an industry.

Today, our relationships with our interfraternal partners have never been stronger. While the last year has certainly strained those relationships, we have been able to engage in meaningful dialogue with the new leaders of each of those associations about a variety of issues, and know from those conversations we all share the same goal of advancing the fraternal movement and providing a safe and meaningful experiences for our members. I have been impressed with the new leadership of these groups, their willingness to listen, their humility and their genuine desire to be good partners with AFA.

It is truly a new day, and despite the struggles and turmoil of the last year, I have never been more confident in our industry's leaders and their genuine desire to address the very real challenges facing the fraternal movement. As an association, we will continue to work with our partners in higher education and the fraternal industry to advocate for our

members and the work that we all do, to educate our members about relevant topics, and to provide our members with meaningful professional development opportunities.

AFA is uniquely positioned in the field of higher education representing a diverse membership – campus-based professionals, headquarters professionals, Vice Presidents, Executive Directors and every umbrella group. We are compelled to speak when issues arise that so strongly and broadly affect all of our membership.

We are also compelled to be strong partners representing what we feel to be in best interest of the Association’s long-term health of the Association.