

Rochester's Fraternity and Sorority Affairs Office Recognized for Positive Changes

The Fraternity and Sorority Affairs (FSA) staff at the University of Rochester has recently earned the Outstanding Change Initiative Award from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA). The AFA announced the award at their annual meeting in December and attributes Rochester's selection to their efforts to increase participation, empower student leaders from Greek organizations, and integrate fraternity and sorority activities into the fabric of student life.

"Fraternities and sororities thrive when they offer well-rounded, positive experiences for students outside of the classroom" says Dominic Greene, director of Fraternity and Sorority Life at Northwestern University, who led the AFA awards committee. "Rochester does that by identifying areas where they can improve and implementing strategies that move their organizations forward. They have created a good, collaborative model that other institutions can follow."

The AFA includes "major initiatives or long term plans that have led to positive changes within the fraternity and sorority community" and the demonstration of "measured improvements, results, and positive outcomes in scholarship, educational programs, leadership development, risk management, retention, or membership recruitment" as major criteria in their selection of a winning school.

Kathy Massie, Rochester's advisor from the National Panhellenic Conference, credited Rochester's "strong and consistent leadership...supportive fraternity and sorority professionals...and a well-developed recruitment counselor program" in her nomination letter.

These positive changes have occurred under the oversight of Monica Miranda Smalls, FSA director, who has led her group in a series of innovative changes, most notably the Expectations for Excellence program, which offers guidance and direction for fraternities and sororities as they focus on goal-setting, planning, and self-assessment. This process also involves a formal review process that culminates in recommendations for future improvement.

“The Expectations for Excellence is the hallmark of our fraternity and sorority system,” says Smalls, who was also recently elected president of AFA, but was not a member of the awards committee. “Because our students are thinking, planning, and acting strategically, they are influencing the campus culture and becoming increasingly relevant to the co-curricular experience of students at Rochester.”

Over 900 of Rochester’s undergraduates participate in Greek life and over 80 percent of those students are also the member of another campus group. 18 percent of these students hold a leadership position in their second co-curricular organization. Fraternity and sorority members represent 45 percent of the members of the Student Association, Rochester’s undergraduate governing body. This influence has tangible effects: last year’s Relay for Life, which benefits the American Cancer Society, received \$21,140 raised by fraternity and sorority members, which was 46 percent of the total fundraising.

Rochester’s fraternity and sorority members consistently garner awards from their national organizations, as well as fellowships such as the Fulbright Scholarship and Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships, among others. Greek organizations have organized events to benefit the entire student body, which have included eating disorder awareness, sexual assault prevention, and the inclusion of Earth Day sustainability efforts in Greek Week programming.

Founded in 1976, the AFA provides support and professional development for its 1,700 members by fostering partnerships across higher education and offering innovative resources and services to those involved in advising fraternities and sororities.

About the University of Rochester

The University of Rochester (www.rochester.edu) is one of the nation’s leading private universities. Located in Rochester, N.Y., the University gives students exceptional opportunities for interdisciplinary study and close collaboration with faculty through its unique cluster-based curriculum. Its College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering is complemented by the Eastman School of Music, Simon School of Business, Warner School of Education, Laboratory for Laser Energetics, Schools of Medicine and Nursing, and the Memorial Art Gallery.

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