

Expectations for Excellence Plan Review Feedback

General Information

The Subcommittee on Standards was generally pleased with the timeliness and caliber of the Expectations for Excellence plans submitted on March 1, 2006. It was obvious that most groups took the planning task seriously and as a result, the Subcommittee was able to get a very good sense of what the fraternity and sorority community has in store for the campus this year.

While reviewing the documents, it became apparent that there were some common comments about the reports from Subcommittee members. These comments and corresponding suggestions are listed below for your review and use. Following this section, there might be some more specific feedback for your particular organization under the listing of “specific feedback, recommendations, and requirements.” If there is no feedback, then the feeling of the Subcommittee is that the general feedback in your case is sufficient.

Resubmission

Any group may resubmit their plans at any time for reconsideration by Subcommittee members. Groups are encouraged to use this formative assessment process throughout the year to improve plans and to keep lines of communication open. Groups are always encouraged to remain in constant contact with their Advocate, who should be the primary source of feedback about your plans.

Some groups will be required to resubmit plans if the Subcommittee did not consider the current plan to be likely to lead to accreditation at the end of the year. Such groups have until **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12, 2006**, to resubmit their plans to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs (Wilson Commons 510) for further review. Groups who must resubmit their plans will be notified of this fact under the “specific feedback, recommendations, and requirements” section below.

Common Comments and Suggestions

Plan Reads Too Much Like an Annual Report

Comment:

Many plans contained far too much information about what had happened in the past year. The Subcommittee was much more interested in what you were planning for the upcoming year. In many cases, groups are planning the same or similar events.

Suggestion:

It is fine to repeat events from year to year, especially if your intent is to improve upon a program or to make a successful event even more successful. Re-read your plan to ensure that it is future-oriented, and consider the possibility of resubmission even if it is not required.

Lack of Specificity

Comment:

Many groups submitted general plans for policy changes, programs, and events without establishing clear timelines and responsibilities. Such plans are more difficult to implement, as individuals have no clear sense of who is responsible for implementing tasks and exactly when the tasks are supposed to be accomplished. As plans change, groups can adjust timelines and responsibilities. Vague plans often lead groups to procrastinate until the last minute, when such plans get implemented hurriedly, frequently during the least effective period of the year, and especially when other groups are attempting to do the same thing.

Suggestion:

Identify what actions need to be accomplished. Assign individuals or groups to each action, and establish a target date by which that action needs to be accomplished. Require that responsible individuals regularly update membership on progress.

Lack of College Connection

Comment:

Being College-centered means that groups are aware of and support The College's mission and programs. It also means that they take advantage of College programs. One of the bigger changes intended through the Expectations for Excellence program is to increase collaboration with these programs in new and creative ways. Many groups lacked this focus and seemed to focus on external constituencies too much. Not every program or event has to be connected intimately with The College, but the plans of the group should reflect a focus on the fact that it is part of the college community.

Suggestion:

In many cases, members of the Subcommittee knew of a fraternity or sorority which has a better connection with The College than that which was listed in the organization's plans. If your organization feels like this may be the case, then a simple review of the objective statements in the Expectations document and a resubmission of altered plans may be appropriate. For those groups who cannot think of many connections, one idea may be to canvas the membership with regard to where interests and involvements are, and to encourage these members to use their interests and involvements to create a better connection to The College. For groups living in the residential areas, your surrounding community and its Residential Life staff present excellent opportunities for collaborations. Develop some specific plans to improve these connections, keeping in mind the feedback about specificity above, and resubmit your plan.

Plan Reflects Improvement without Change

Comment:

Your group was asked to provide a self-rating before and after implementation of your plan. In many cases, groups indicated that they would demonstrate an improvement in rating, but there was no specific plan to improve. In fact, some groups indicated that they would improve simply by continuing to do what they had always done. Intuitively, this is extremely unlikely.

Suggestion:

Groups have two basic options: change the rating to reflect no improvement, or develop a plan to change. Either is acceptable as far as the Subcommittee is concerned. It would be impossible for every group to improve upon every category every year. Groups should carefully pick the areas where they themselves are most interested in improvement, and plan accordingly. Planning to prioritize one area for change over another and accurately rating themselves in all categories based upon these plans are indications of a group that has become self-aware.

Plan Reflects High or Highest Ratings in All or Most Categories

Comment:

Did your group rate itself a “5” in every category? In most? If so, changing for the better is a near impossibility. Organizations in search of continuous improvement take last year’s “fives” to be this year’s “threes,” especially if the group has decided that this is an area in which it will focus. The Subcommittee asked for these ratings not because it wanted to see all “fives,” but because it wanted to see how aware groups were of their own need and desire to be excellent and to improve.

Suggestion:

Consider carefully the question of whether or not your group could become better, and in which areas. Re-rate yourself to a level more appropriate to reflecting where you are versus where you would like to be. Develop plans to bring the group to increasingly higher levels. For highly-functioning groups, it is possible to develop a long-term plan for multiple years, in which case you may bring yourself to a “three,” but plan on staying at a “three” this year simply because your long-term plan does not address that area this year.

Specific Feedback, Recommendations, and Requirements

Resubmission of updated plans is suggested but not required. (12 chapters fell in this category)

Resubmission of updated plans is strongly suggested but not required. (6 chapters fell in this category)

Resubmission of updated plans is required by 4:00 p.m. on April 12, 2006. (10 chapters fell in this category)