

Thursday, September 27, 2018

Dear West Virginia University Family,

I write to you with a heavy heart, as I had hoped we could come to an agreeable resolution with the fraternities that have chosen to dissociate from our University. However, we were informed that chapter activities continued. Therefore, I need to inform you of the University's decisions and actions.

In August, several fraternities sent letters stating their intent to dissociate from West Virginia University with the intent to form their own independent Interfraternity Council. Over the past six weeks, we have communicated many times with the North American Interfraternity Conference, fraternity alumni, executive directors of the national organizations, as well as with the students.

The five fraternities – Alpha Sigma Phi, Kappa Alpha Order, Theta Chi, Sigma Chi and Phi Sigma Kappa – have been unhappy with University regulations enacted over the last three years, primarily a ban on recruiting first semester freshmen.

Through those discussions, the University did agree to change the timing of elections and clarified the purpose and process of the Student Conduct review. Also, we remain in discussion with the local Interfraternity Council leadership and the North American Interfraternity Conference regarding deferred membership.

While these conversations were taking place, the dissociated fraternities chose to ignore University policies and procedures. It has been reported that some have recruited and initiated freshmen into their ranks. Despite discussions with national leadership and student leaders, several of the fraternities chose to continue with their membership programs, ultimately putting students at risk.

Therefore, West Virginia University no longer recognizes the following fraternities and will prohibit the chapters from applying to be formally recognized by the University for a period of at least 10 years:

- **Alpha Sigma Phi**

- **Kappa Alpha Order**
- **Phi Sigma Kappa**
- **Sigma Chi**
- **Theta Chi**

When a fraternity loses recognition from the University it means the fraternity can no longer participate in the WVU-recognized Interfraternity Council or any of its sponsored programs. Chapters also are not allowed to participate in programs sponsored by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, such as Homecoming or Greek Week. Chapters may not participate in any University-sponsored activity such as intramurals, nor any activity sponsored by a recognized student organization.

The chapters will not be able to reference “West Virginia University” or use any of the institution’s marks or brands in any capacity. They are not allowed to reserve any space on campus for programming or business purposes.

In addition, I will ensure that we will continually remind students and parents that these chapters are not operating under the guidance of the University and will discourage students from joining.

However, let me make this point very clear: These chapters DO have the support of their national organizations to operate independently from the University. In fact, the national organizations and their leadership *encouraged* our students to dissociate with West Virginia University.

It is clear, and extremely unfortunate, that our students are being pressured by their national organizations to oppose deferred or delayed membership, which we believe is an important component to ensuring students have a firm academic foundation before joining fraternities. The national organizations have no ability to conduct local oversight of these chapters as their offices are located states away. I believe these national organizations are more concerned about dollars than our students’ lives.

West Virginia University has been a deferred rush campus since 2015. We made that decision following the tragic loss of freshman Nolan Burch, who was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. He died at an unsanctioned fraternity event — an event that was held after its charter

had been revoked by the national office and was no longer recognized by the University.

It is extremely disappointing to me that we have had to go down this path. As I have said many times before, I am an ardent supporter of fraternity life. Many good things grow from our fraternities and sororities: service to our communities, philanthropy dollars raised for national causes and networks that last a lifetime. And our fraternities and sororities that are in good standing continue to exhibit leadership and influence. I look forward to working with them to create solutions that will shape the University for years to come.

These are copies of the [letters sent to the disassociated fraternities](#). And if at any time, you are unsure as to whether a fraternity or sorority is in good standing, you can visit our site that [clearly shows the status of each organization](#).

As president of West Virginia University, my first priority is always our students. I care deeply about every student on this campus. I am deeply concerned by the decision these chapters have made and can only hope that the chapter leadership has carefully considered the impact not being associated with the University will have on the chapter and its membership.

However, I am committed to changing the culture on this campus. The actions the University is taking are necessary if we are to create a culture that is healthy, vibrant and worthy of this institution. Together, we can ensure the values of West Virginia University continue to make our campus an inclusive, safe and purposeful place.

E. Gordon Gee

President, West Virginia University