MIT FSILG ACCREDITATION

Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee
Academic Year 2016-17

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Abstract

For the first time in the 11 year history of Accreditation, all groups that were on campus at the end of last year are now accredited without reservations. 24 groups were reviewed, 2 of which were new: Theta Tau and Delta Phi Epsilon. We agreed to support volunteer training where possible by providing more of an overview at reviews. We also gave an overview of Accreditation for the September plenary meeting with best practices and areas needing improvement that are posted on-line.

Several changes to the program were discussed during the year and are under review to implement next year. Most importantly, we will start work with Panhel and ILG representatives to customize the Basic Data Form to improve the match to those groups' operations. The Committee completed the third year using a rubric to provide uniform standards by which living groups are reviewed. The use of the rubric will likely change if it is retained. After discussion with the Board and within the Committee, we will at least revamp the examples to highlight best practices and disconnect it from the activities on the date of the review. We will work on more outreach to present the methods and goals of Accreditation to the undergraduate councils. We developed a method of releasing BDF data for approved requests within the AILG without risk to individual group's privacy.

We had 34 volunteers who participated as reviewers this year, providing 48 reviewer-days. We continue to recruit new volunteer reviewers but the five-member Accreditation Committee itself would benefit from new members.

Overview

The program has been under development for almost 16 years and has evolved considerably over that time. This was the 11th year in which the program was operated by the volunteer Accreditation Committee. Since the basic operation has not changed we will not repeat material from previous annual reports.

The balance of the report is organized as follows. Section 1 provides some of the highlights of the 2016-17 academic year. Section 2 outlines the Program Objectives. Section 3 summarizes the results of the Accreditation Program for this year, providing an overview of the review status. Section 4 gives a summary of areas where the Accreditation Program can and should be improved, and provides planning information for next year. Section 5 acknowledges everyone who gave time and resources over the 2016-17 year to the Accreditation Program. Section 6 provides references to online resources to find more information about the AILG and the Accreditation Program for readers so inclined.

Appendices A and B summarize best practices and areas needing improvement from the results and observations documented by the Visiting Committees this past academic year.

Also, we have compiled a Compendium of the complete review reports from all of the 25 reviews run in the 2016-17 Accreditation Program. This document is available only by request to members of the MIT AILG community. Any responses to reviews received from the FSILGs are also included in the Compendium.

1. Program Objectives

There are two main objectives of the Accreditation Program:

- provide a program in which FSILG undergraduate leaders and the AILG (the alumni leaders of MIT FSILG house corporations and advisory boards) may actively exchange ideas to improve the FSILG community and support its members by operating the Accreditation Program as peers; and

- provide the MIT administration with a multidimensional evaluation of the overall health of each MIT organization that qualifies as a FSILG.

2. Challenges and New Features of the 2016-17 Academic Year

The 2016-17 academic year had a similar review load to the previous year, and there were quite a few additional tasks to keep the Accreditation Committee busy. These included two major highlights that deserve special mention in this report. Because of the agitation the "rubric" (see section 2.1) has caused within the community, we will reemphasize our focus on best practices and collaboration. Second was a request from an AILG committee to retrieve recruitment and retention data from the Basic Data Forms that are completed by our organizations. Per Accreditation Privacy Policy these data would not be released at all, thus we required both a vote of the AILG plenary to approve the specific use and an opt-in by each organization willing to release specific data fields.

2.1. Metrics

For the third year, the committee deployed a rubric to provide examples standards by which living groups can be reviewed. In some circumstances, the rubric as implemented in the past had a counterproductive effect on our program goals. On the other hand, the rubric examples appear to be good talking points for reviews, and we are discussing whether asking the organizations being reviewed to pick some of the examples to discuss might be a more stress-free method of moving forward. We hope to complete our discussion during the late summer in order to implement it for the 2017-18 academic year.

2.2. Increased Participation of FSILGs in Visiting Committees.

The Accreditation Committee has a stated goal to have each and every FSILG provide at least one member to serve on a Visiting Committee. Our intent is twofold: first, to alleviate volunteer burnout, and second, to foster sharing of ideas by having volunteers bring ideas they observe back to their own organizations. We lost a number of volunteers due to transfers and other reasons, and the 48 volunteer service days were provided by representatives of only 22 of our 37 living groups, down from 26 two years ago when we performed a comparable number of reviews. Though we were able to recruit 7 new alumni/ae volunteers, only two were from organizations which were not currently providing other volunteers. We will always need to continue working toward broadening our volunteer base as we recruit new volunteers.

3. Review Results

During academic year 2016-17, we reviewed 24 of the 37 FSILGs which are currently active at MIT. One of these was reviewed both in the Fall and again in the Spring. The year ended with all organizations recommended for accreditation, although in the case of one of these the report included "reservations". This was due to this being a newly reorganized organization which we reviewed prior to beginning full operation, and is scheduled for a next review in Fall 2017. None of the organizations reviewed this year were found to need significant improvements in areas of recruitment, governance, and alumni involvement. Please see the table at the end of this section for specific detail.

In the case of the finding including reservations (during the fall), the Visiting Committees listed the reasons for their decision in the findings in their reports (see the Compendium). Written responses to reviews submitted by organizations, if any, are also included immediately after each report. These responses, after removal of anything pertaining to the private comments section of the reports, will be kept with the reports and have been forwarded together with the reviewers' reports to the MIT administration.

MIT volunteers and staff offer assistance to all organizations needing improvement.

Due to the fact that students transition through each residential living group over a 3 year period (sophomore, junior, and senior years), only one-third or less of the students originally present during a review will be present again for a second review two years later. This underscores the need to review every living group every two years as well as the urgency of returning the next term to re-review any organization with a finding including reservations or not recommended.

The table on the next page shows all FSILGs active at MIT during the 2016-17 academic year with the dates and results of the most recent reviews and the planned timeframe for the next review. The names of the 24 FSILGs reviewed during the year are in **bold**.

Group Name	Last Review	Result at last review - UPDATE PENDING	Next review
Alpha Chi Omega	27-Nov-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Alpha Delta Phi	1-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Alpha Epsilon Phi	28-Nov-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Alpha Epsilon Pi	28-Nov-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Alpha Phi	1-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Beta Theta Pi	14-Mar-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Chi Phi	25-Apr-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Delta Kappa Epsilon	24-Apr-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2018
Delta Phi Epsilon	16-Oct-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017*
Delta Tau Delta	21-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Epsilon Theta	27-Nov-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Fenway House	15-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Kappa Alpha Theta	25-Apr-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Kappa Sigma	25-Sep-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Nu Delta	25-Apr-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Number 6 Club	27-Mar-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2018
Phi Beta Epsilon	1-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Phi Delta Theta	25-Sep-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Phi Kappa Sigma	27-Nov-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Phi Kappa Theta	14-Mar-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Phi Sigma Kappa	16-Oct-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Pi Beta Phi	16-Oct-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
Pi Lambda Phi	27-Nov-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2018
pika	14-Mar-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Sigma Alpha Epsilon	14-Mar-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Sigma Chi	24-Apr-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2018
Sigma Kappa	21-Feb-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Sigma Nu	14-Mar-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Sigma Phi Epsilon	1-Nov-2015	Not Recommended for Accreditation	Upon request from MIT
Student House	14-Mar-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Tau Epsilon Phi	1-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Theta Chi	27-Mar-2016	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2018
Theta Delta Chi	15-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017
Theta Tau	9-Sep-2016	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2017+
Theta Xi	25-Apr-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
WILG	21-Feb-2017	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2019
Zeta Beta Tau	15-Nov-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2017

4. Areas of Accreditation that Need Improvement and Other Plans for Next Year

The Accreditation Committee has reviewed all suggestions received during Academic Year 2016-17 and has incorporated many of the suggestions, including such things as wording changes in the Basic Data Form. In this section we highlight first those areas where we are considering

implementation of changes for next year and then discuss plans for next year and some areas where progress has been made but continued diligence is required.

The rubric data have been obtained for all FSILGs. We plan to make significant changes to the way the rubric is used, in particular, removing the numeric qualifiers, and most likely using it only to highlight areas for discussion during the visit.

We will continue to work with the FSILG office to ensure accurate occupancy, recruitment, and retention data that are currently obtained when living groups fill out the BDF. As these data are also desired and often required to be reported to the FSILG office, we will work toward a single point of data entry that can be administered by the FSILG office that also provides BDF data for reviews. Privacy issue have to be worked out with MIT legal, and this prevented completion of this work during the current year.

To continue with our two year planned review cycle and our next term revisitation schedule, we must review 15 of our 37 organizations during the 2017-18 academic year, including followup reviews with two organizations new to the campus. Our schedule for next year has us reviewing 11 during the Fall Term. During the Spring Term we have planned reviews at 4 FSILGs, plus any revisits in the Spring Term required as a result of findings returned from the Fall Term reviews.

During the next year we plan to work on doing some customization of the BDF by flagging each question as relevant to groups belonging to one or more of our three councils and whether residential or not.

5. Acknowledgments

We extend our warmest thanks to all the volunteers who have participated in this program. We thank all of our organizations for their participation in and support of this program, especially the house corporation members and undergraduates who, in the process of being reviewed, have put many hours into preparing data and in contributing to the future success of MIT's FSILG community.   We especially thank the Visiting Committee members who participated in the reviews and helped write the reports during this period: Steve Baker, Steve Carhart, Eric Cigan, Mike Feinstein, Bob Ferrara, Aimee Forsythe, Pam Gannon, Melissa Hansel, Kim Hunter, Anya Kattef, Hauke Kite-Powell, Jim Latimer, David Lawrence, Alice Leung, Herman Marshall, Patrick McCabe, Akil Middleton, Kevin Moore, Herb Mower, Liz Oltman, Mary Linton Peters, Alex Pina, Roy Russell, Ernie Sabine, Arianna Smith, Ashley Smith, Dan Smythe, Mark Spadafora, Alexander Stone, Cecilia Stuopis, Jim Wagner, Sara Wilmer, Stan Wulf, Amy Yu. And we thank all the participants in previous years who helped to develop a successful, working program. Thanks to the twenty-two organizations who provided visiting committee members: ΑΧΩ, ΑΦ, ΒΘΠ, ΔΚΕ, ΔΤΔ, ΕΘ, Fenway House, ΚΑΘ, ΛΧΑ, ΦΒΕ, ΦΔΘ, ΠΒΦ, ΣΑΕ, ΣΧ, ΣΚ, Student House, ΤΕΦ, ΘΧ, ΘΔΧ, ΘΤ, ΘΞ, ΖΨ.

A great deal of thanks is also due to the MIT staff in the office of the Dean of Student Life who supported this program, especially Deans Brad Badgley and Judy Robinson, Senior Dean and VP

of Student Life Suzy Nelson, and staff members Kayla LeMay, Liz Jason, and Jennifer Meredith, whose support of this program has helped greatly to ensure its success.

6. <u>References</u>

AILG Historical Website, accreditation main page (past documents):
     ailg.mit.edu/committees/ailg-accreditation-program/

Accreditation Coordinator's operational website (current documents, results, and policies):
     web.mit.edu/ailg/ailgreviews/

Basic Data Form (sample form accessible to all and password-protected access for FSILGs):
     ailg.scripts.mit.edu/bdf/

Appendix A: Best Practices in the MIT FSILG Community

Alumni attend Accreditation Reviews, learning and sharing Best Practices.

Every member is party-safe trained.

Membership development includes ways for new members to assist or become officers.

Officer handbooks are dynamically maintained via an on-line system.

Capital campaigns are conducted regularly to renovate housing.

Alumni are involved in member development via one-on-one consultation, group talks, and even field trips.

Lectures by professors improves focus on academics and improves relations with faculty.

Members are encouraged to join at least two on-campus organizations or sports.

Member development explicitly addresses mental health issues.

There is an alumni advisory board that is independent of the house corporation.

Membership diversity is deliberately pursued and maintained.

Setting aside 20% of the operating budget for capital expenditures can avoid problems with deferred maintenance.

Communication with parents (e.g., with newsletters) can facilitate recruitment and improve retention.

Quiet hours encourage undisturbed scholarship.

Living space and commons areas are clean and well maintained.

Living groups cooperate in community service events organized by others.

Online tools are used to improve member communication.

Non-local alumni are involved in house corporation affairs as treasurer, communications officer, and similar roles that do not require a physical presence on the property.

Appendix B: Areas of the MIT FSILG Community Needing Improvement

Volunteering for Accreditation reviews helps avoid problems encountered elsewhere.

Informal recruitment methods are usually insufficient to maintain or grow.

Risks attributed to summer boarders can be mitigated with member "sponsorship" and 1/1 member/boarder ratio or better.

Recruitment improves with specific training and process review.

Restarting a chapter requires very good records of processes that may get lost.

Some groups have not implemented housing contracts for summer boarders.

When there is little equity in a residence due to a lease agreement, alumni may not contribute much.

Some groups do not have independent judicial boards for dealing with internal, sensitive issues that can distract officers.

Pictures posted to the group web site or other public web sites that give the appearance of underage drinking or poor self-control should be removed.

Alumni house corporations or advisory boards with low membership are subject to individual burnout, so piecemeal tasks should be developed to encourage new alumni involvement.

Appendix C: Compendium: FSILG Review Reports

In the "full version" of this report, the accreditation reviews as well as the responses from the reviewed organizations appear after this introductory page. They are organized in alphabetical order by organization.

Because it is the policy of the Accreditation Committee to share the full reports only within the MIT AILG community, posted versions and other widely circulated copies of the summary report do not include the individual reviews. Any member of the MIT AILG community may obtain copies of any or all of the reports by contacting the Accreditation Coordinator or the FSILG Cooperative. Members will be provided copies of the reports for their own organizations in electronic form. Other reports or the entire Compendium will be printed and mailed upon request.