Resolution: 06111715
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Sponsoring Senator: Sanjay Mahboobani (Greek), Chris Fong (Greek), Darian Nourian (Greek), Eric Dubbury (Residential Senator), Aaron Rifkind (Residential Senator),

Date: 11/17/15
RE: Deferred Fall Recruitment

Resolution

WHEREAS, Administrators have claimed that on our campus a significant portion of mental health issues, alcohol transports, and sexual assault cases are observed with first year students, and can be attributed to the Greek recruitment process,

WHEREAS, The Academic Senate passed a resolution on September 30th, 2015 requesting that administration defer Fall recruitment for Greek organizations to the Spring for Freshmen students, and for transfer students until they have a GPA,
WHEREAS, The Majority of Greek leaders believe that deferring recruitment to the Spring will not rectify these issues, and will in fact create new problems that will be detrimental to the student body,

WHEREAS, Fraternities and Sororities require new member participation in programming such as Alcohol EDU, Greek Life EDU, Sexual Assault Prevention Programming, new member retreats, and Presidents’ Teach-ins to educate members and leaders on issues of alcohol abuse, mental health, and sexual assault, and the resources available to handle them, that first semester freshman otherwise would not be exposed to,

WHEREAS, Sorority members have reported that having the support system of their chapter “helped [them] learn how to handle their alcohol limits”, “held them accountable”, and made them feel “much more safe and secure.” Additionally, members reported that without their sorority, they would have felt “much more vulnerable at [social events]” during their first semester1,

WHEREAS, Fraternity members at Universities with Spring rush cited excessive alcohol consumption by potential Spring rushees in order to “impress active members’ as a major problem. Alternatively, many fraternities at USC require their new members to stay sober at a number of social events 2,

WHEREAS, Administrators have also cited academics as a main concern, claiming that students have “[come] to class exhausted” and underperform in the classroom, which fails to fully acknowledge the academic expectations and achievements of the Greek community,

WHEREAS, USC Greek life is one of only a handful of Greek systems nationwide having a Greek average GPA above the all undergraduate average3, with an all Greek GPA average of 3.31, which is significantly higher than the University wide GPA average of 3.164,

WHEREAS, Greek organizations provide spaces for first semester freshman to focus on academics, with 20.8% of Greek students reporting that they utilize academic study hours hosted at their chapter daily, 61% reporting that they utilize these academic study hours once or numerous time a week5, and most fraternity chapters requiring mandatory study hours as part of their pledging process,

WHEREAS, Most Greek organizations have GPA requirements for first year students that must be met in order to be in good standing with the chapter, and even higher requirements to hold

1 Survey
2 University of Maryland IFC member in leadership, Vanderbilt University IFC member in leadership
3 Add Greek GPA vs campus wide GPA.
4 Greek office reports from 2015 Spring semester
5 Survey
leadership positions; additionally, many Greek organizations have incentive and reward programs for high GPAs and exam grades,

WHEREAS, 90.9% of Greek students reportedly have members from their organizations in at least one of their classes, and 76.4% have chapter members in two or more of their classes, thereby introducing them to classmates they may not otherwise have met, and providing them with study partners to excel in the class,\(^6\) particularly during their first semester.

WHEREAS, Various faculty and administrators have cited mental health concerns as a reason for deferring Fall recruitment, however there is no evidence to suggest that deferring recruitment will improve these circumstances,

WHEREAS, 97.5% of survey respondents reported that joining a Greek organization at USC helped them assimilate to the University\(^7\),

WHEREAS, Many out of state students cited Fall recruitment as the reason they were able to adjust and make friends right away at USC,

WHEREAS, Sorority chapters provide first semester freshman with advisors and peers who actively look out for mental health issues, problematic alcohol consumption, and other concerning behavior and who can recommend the appropriate student services when necessary,

WHEREAS, 90% of Greek students have reported turning to another Greek member for support or advice, and 91.4% of Greek students have reported finding mentors in their respective chapters\(^8\),

WHEREAS, The Academic Senate proposes that “new students need time to explore all that the university has to offer educationally, socially, and personally before they commit to any particular path, including Greek organizations”, but by deferring recruitment to the Spring, students may spend their whole year pursuing Greek organizations rather than just the Fall semester, thereby affecting their sense of belonging and academic performance for the entire school year,

WHEREAS, 78.3% of survey respondents are involved in at least one other organization on campus besides Greek life, including USG, Troy Camp, JEP, Society 53, Trojan Marching Band, WYSE, & many more, and over 30% hold leadership positions in other organizations,\(^9\) and many houses incentivize members to join outside organizations,

\(^6\) Survey
\(^7\) Survey data
\(^8\) Survey
\(^9\) Survey
WHEREAS, Many students reported joining their chapter in the Fall as a major influence on their decision to also pursue involvement in other organizations.10

WHEREAS, 74.2% of Greek students have reported being involved in leadership positions in their house; deferring recruitment defers this practice of leadership and professional development, especially for Spring admits who may not have the opportunity to hold these positions until the end of their junior year, a time that is typical of abroad programs that ultimately prevent them from participating in their chapters leadership,

WHEREAS, Deferring recruitment to the Spring semester will promote the practice of “dirty rush,” or the incidental use of alcohol in a social environment without proper oversight or accountability, and in the case of Sororities, will prevent current members from associating with potential new members for a whole semester, thereby creating an unwelcoming and aloof student body,

WHEREAS, many Greek students feel that Sorority Spring recruitment would not eradicate the distracted behavior of individuals going through recruitment from the their first semester at USC, but rather extend that behavior from the first week of classes to the entire semester, essentially creating a semester long recruitment process,

WHEREAS, Many Greek students feel that Fraternity Spring recruitment would not eradicate pledging obligations that otherwise would have occurred in the Fall, but rather that it will create a de facto year long recruitment process beginning the first week freshmen men arrive on campus, and ending at the end of Spring semester when they are finally initiated,

WHEREAS, Greek students at Universities that currently hold Spring recruitment report a major negative effect of this to be an unofficial extension of the recruitment process and the distracted behavior that accompanies this across the entire first semester,

WHEREAS, The Fall recruitment process serves a platform for new students to make friends, even if they decide not to join a Greek organization,

WHEREAS, The recruitment process is non-binding and those rushing and pledging a fraternity or sorority may drop at any time if they feel as if they are overwhelmed,

WHEREAS, The Administrator’s plans fail to address concerns of how deferred recruitment may further isolate certain students on campus, both financially and socially,

WHEREAS, Many transfer students from schools with deferred recruitment reported that their experience in the Fall at their previous University was “isolating”11

10 Survey
11 Survey
WHEREAS, Spring admits would not be able to rush until the Spring of their sophomore year, almost halfway through their college careers,

WHEREAS, Many Spring admits already report trouble adjusting to USC, and many Spring admits in the Greek System reported that Spring Recruitment would make them feel even more isolated from Fall admits when assimilating\textsuperscript{12},

WHEREAS, Individuals who do not receive bids will be more distraught because they will have spent three months pursuing that fraternity or sorority, rather than one week,

WHEREAS, Many houses have expressed concerns that Spring recruitment would result in a declining membership thereby decreasing cash flow, making it financially burdensome for many houses to cover fixed costs such as maintenance expenses, operating expenses, and mortgage expenses,

WHEREAS, Under such circumstances, these houses will be inclined to increase dues, making it more financially difficult for members to join the house, and further limiting the opportunity for membership in the organization to financially endowed individuals,

WHEREAS, Deferred recruitment may decrease membership in certain chapters so much that they may be forced to dissolve,

WHEREAS, Fraternity and Sorority housing serves as an affordable housing option for many current members and new members (in the Spring) who would otherwise struggle to afford other university and non-university housing options,

WHEREAS, It would significantly shorten the winter recess for Greek students as an early return date would be necessary in order to prepare for the recruitment process, and flights would have to be booked in the middle of the holiday season,

WHEREAS, This policy unfairly targets Greek letter organizations and does not apply to other student groups with similar or identical processes,

WHEREAS, It should be up to the discretion of the student to pursue organizations of their choosing at the time of their choosing,

WHEREAS, The Academic Senate did not consult with Greek students and Greek leadership (IFC, PHC, AGC) before passing their resolution,

\textsuperscript{12} Survey
WHEREAS, A record number of over 2237 (and counting) Greek students have responded to a survey on deferred recruitment in the 72 hour period since being given the opportunity to voice their concerns, including members from all six Greek Councils.\(^\text{13}\)

WHEREAS, 83.6% of respondents reported joining their Greek organization at USC during a Fall semester, and 96% of respondents believe that joining a Greek organization in their Fall semester improved their first year experience at USC, and would choose this again over Spring Rush.\(^\text{14}\)

BE IT RESOLVED, That deferred recruitment not be implemented at USC at this time, and Greek organizations continue to share the equal right to associate and recruit during the Fall semester,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That administration welcome the opportunity to work with Greek leaders to address any concerns with the recruitment process in a manner that is fair, collaborative, and effective,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Trustee Board Chair John Mork, President C.L. Max Nikias, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Michael Quick, Vice President of Student Affairs Ainsley Carry, Assistant Provost for Student Engagement Monique Allard, President of Academic Senate Ginger Clark, Vice President of Academic Senate Paula Cannon, and USG President Rini Sampath by Secretary Amy Perez within 1 week of being passed by the Undergraduate Student Government Senate.

\[\text{Signature}\]
President 2015 - 2016

\[\text{Signature}\]
Lulu Cannon, Witness

\(^\text{13}\) Survey
\(^\text{14}\) Survey