



Resolved to Educate

Educational support for: Fraternity/sorority user fees

In order to fund certain student services such as student activities, recreation and use of a health center, some campus administrations choose to charge additional fees to students. When a specific group of students benefits from a service, e.g., educational programming provided solely for members of fraternities and sororities, administrators may consider collecting fees from those beneficiaries. Some host institutions collect — or are considering the merits of collecting — a fee from fraternity and sorority members to pay for services, personnel and/or facilities that benefit the interfraternal community exclusively. These fees range from partial to total funding of services.

In most cases, campus administrations have a sufficient budget to support the fraternity and sorority life office, but in rare situations, a student fee may be necessary to finance a portion of the support provided to fraternal organizations. When a student fee must be collected, NPC recommends several steps be taken before the fee is imposed. NPC understands that a thriving fraternal community provides many benefits to campus life. It is in the best interests of all partners to ensure that funding exists to achieve these benefits.

Recommendations

- Fees should be clearly restricted to services provided to the fraternity/sorority community and have the appropriate college/university approvals.
- Constituents such as chapter leaders, College Panhellenic leaders, chapter advisors, students and alumnae of the institution should be included in any dialogue about fee proposals or revisions to existing fees.
- Policies and procedures pertaining to the collection and disbursement of fees should be documented in writing.
- Fee should be collected by the institution from each student at the same time and in the same manner that tuition and other fees are collected. Direct collection ensures that the College Panhellenic will not in any way be responsible as an administrative agent of the institution.
- Procedures for membership reporting should be clearly documented and conform to NPC policy, including naming the party responsible for accurate membership records and specific steps to solve a dispute over the records or a discrepancy in reporting.
- Policies and procedures established to levy fees should not infringe on the rights of fraternities and sororities as private membership organizations.
- An advisory board should be established to provide a review and feedback mechanism to the fraternity/sorority life office as an ongoing assessment of the funding model.

Suggested makeup of advisory board

- Student representative from each fraternal council on campus
- Alumnae representative from each fraternal council such as chapter advisor, house corporation board member or faculty/staff advisor
- President of each fraternal council on campus

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Questions for consideration

If your campus is moving toward a fraternity/sorority user fee, inform your area advisor and the inter/national organizations with a chapter on campus. Students should become engaged in the process. The following are questions to help guide the discussion with an institution. Note that **NPC recommendations** are included for reference.

Will there be students who are exempt from the fee?

- If students are abroad or otherwise inactive in the chapter, yet still enrolled, will they be expected to pay the fee?
- Will new members pay the fee?

How is the fee established?

- Why is the fee being considered?
- What is the full cost of the services the fee is intended to cover?
 - o Consider the following as possible services a fee could cover:
 - » Salaries of fraternity and sorority professionals
NPC recommendation: Recurring expenses such as salaries whether partial or full cost should be funded through the institution. This avoids any potential employee/employer issues.
 - » Training and development for fraternity/sorority staff, students, advisors and fraternity/sorority housing personnel
NPC recommendation: The training should be collaborative and meet an existing need on the campus for fraternities/sororities specifically and not be redundant to other existing services.
 - » Programming (i.e., speakers and events)
NPC recommendation: In some cases the services provided by the fee may be redundant. If the fee includes programming that is already provided by the chapter, local alumnae or inter/national organization, the fee should be reduced accordingly. Example: If the campus is going to provide a speaker on bystander intervention, first ensure that no other chapter's programming on this topic could be used instead.
 - o Fees should not be used for the following:
 - » Salaries whether partially or fully funded. This avoids any potential employee/employer issues.
 - » Use and maintenance of physical space (i.e., meeting rooms, parking structures, office space or office equipment)
NPC recommendation: The college/university should have other fees or funds to cover capital improvements on campus such as offices. Plus, space needs change; there is no guarantee a specific space will always be used by fraternity/sorority members.
 - » Communication with alumnae, advisors, housing personnel
NPC recommendation: Each chapter has a responsibility to communicate with alumnae; the college/university should work with the chapters to provide an institution message to be included in chapters' newsletters for alumnae of fraternities and sororities.

How will students be educated on the total cost of fraternity/sorority membership including this fee?

- o What is the method used for forecasting the number of students who will pay the fee?
- o What happens if the actual number of students exceeds or falls below the forecast?
- o How will the fee fit into the institution and fraternity/sorority life budgets?
- o How often is the fee collected (annually or each academic term)?
- o How does this fee align and compare with other student fees?
- o What happens if the fee is not disbursed or if there is a surplus?

NPC recommendation: The advisory board should make the decision about how unused money or a surplus will be used (i.e., the fee should be reduced if there is a surplus or additional programming/outreach should be planned).

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What is the process for reviewing and updating fees?

- The advisory board should have access to the fraternity and sorority life office budget/forecast budget for review.
- Identify the process by which the advisory board will review the fee structure to ensure that the appropriate quality and price point of the service continues to meet actual demand.
- Define the role of the advisory board in examining opportunities for cost reduction or service enhancement.

What is the process for assessing/evaluating/providing feedback on the services funded by the fees?

NPC recommendation:

- *The advisory board should annually evaluate services provided by the fee, and should participate with the host institution in an annual audit of the program budget.*
- *Students should be invited and encouraged to evaluate the services provided by the fee. Student input could be collected and reviewed in a variety of ways (e.g., written evaluations, suggestion boxes, committees, open forums).*
- *Fraternity and sorority leadership should expect to receive annually a report of the services that were provided by the fee.*