

## A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR DESEGREGATION OF THE GREEK SYSTEM

### AND THE MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS END

**Whereas** integration of the student body at The University of Alabama has not ensured that the structures and organizations *within* the University are desegregated, and

**Whereas** the most egregious failure to achieve desegregation within the University occurs in a system of 36 all-white Greek social fraternities and sororities with approximately 3,000 members, and

**Whereas** desegregation of the white Greek system was addressed in Student Affairs in the 1970s and has been focus of Faculty Senate legislation in the mid-1980s, the early 1990s, and the year 2000. And whereas the goal of the Greek Accreditation Program was to end segregation in the Greek system by 1996, and

**Whereas** none of these efforts or other efforts by the Administration and students have resulted in a single African-American joining an all-white fraternity or sorority, and

**Whereas** a segregated Greek system is especially offensive to and discriminatory of African-American citizens and students who, as taxpayers, share in the ownership of the state property on which these race-exclusive organizations reside, and

**Whereas** a segregated Greek system is especially pernicious and threatening to the rights of minorities because the system exists on *state* property, thus giving race-exclusive organizations the implicit approval by the state, and

**Whereas** failure to desegregate the white Greek systems denies African-American citizens the equality, freedom, and respect called for in the Constitutional and moral frameworks that shape our country, state, culture, and University, and

**Whereas** desegregating better prepares students for work environments and societal structures that are increasingly multiracial, multicultural, and international, and

**Whereas** the Faculty Senate believes that the majority of our students are not racists; that students desire an integrated Greek system; that a *minority* of racist students, alumni, citizens, and administrators obstruct desegregation of the Greek system; and

that various structures, policies, traditions, and practices of the Greek system cause an "institutional" racism that inhibits the desegregation of the system. And, whereas this institutional racism includes segregated rush; blackball and recommendation systems, and reward structures that fail to encourage faculty and staff to work with Greek organizations to become more inclusive, and

**Whereas** desegregation of the Greek system affords The University of Alabama a rare, profound, and historic opportunity to turn the page on our racially divided past and to write a new chapter in the racial history of our University.

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Faculty Senate calls for a desegregated Greek system at The University of Alabama that transcends token integration to realize a racial inclusivity that will bear the test of time and serve as a model of excellence for other institutions of higher learning. We call for a Greek system that will be a beacon to all that The University of Alabama is a sanctuary where minorities are welcomed, included, protected, and celebrated in all aspects of university life. To this end, the Faculty Senate advocates the following approaches to achieving a desegregated Greek system:

## **MEANS TO ACHIEVING A DESEGREGATED GREEK SYSTEM**

### **Unified Rush.**

Be it resolved that the Greeks and Administration work together to develop a system of unified, or integrated, rush that ensures that African-Americans are exposed to the White fraternities and sororities and that Whites are exposed to African-American fraternities and sororities. Such a system will enhance appreciation and understanding of the diversity of Greek organizations, identify who is interested and capable of pledging, broaden choices for rushees, and make a clear statement that the University has *one* Greek system, not two racially bifurcated systems.

Be it resolved that racial differences in rush systems, rush traditions, and threats to the financial viability of fraternities and sororities are unacceptable justifications for failing to develop and implement a unified system of rush. Let the Administration make clear that allowing minorities to realize their social equality, freedom, and self worth overrides short-run inconveniences and other morally shallow objections to a unified system of rush. Let the Greeks make clear that the success of unified system of rush is contingent upon their meaningful participation in the development of the system. Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate sees no reason for failing to implement a system of unified rush beginning in the 2002-2003 academic year.

## **Modifications to Blackball Systems and Recommendation Systems.**

Be it further resolved that fraternities and sororities implement modifications to selection practices, such as blackball systems, that would allow a small number of racially motivated Greeks to prevent a worthy minority from receiving an invitation to join a fraternity or sorority. Be it further resolved that sororities implement modifications to the practice of requiring recommendations from sorority alumni in order for a prospective minority to receive a bid to join a sorority. Given that African-Americans and other minorities have *never* been a part of the white Greek system at The University of Alabama, they cannot be expected to have the network of Greek alumni support that white rushees have.

### **C. Zero Tolerance for Alumni and Citizen Threats and Actions**

Be it further resolved that the University should not accept financial donations to the University that are contingent upon maintaining a racially segregated Greek system. Be it further resolved that University not waver in its commitment to desegregate the Greek system when alumni and citizens threaten to send or follow through with sending their children to other institutions because of desegregation efforts. We recommend that the University adopt a policy of zero tolerance for the bigotry of those who attempt to hold the University hostage by threatening to withdraw or following through with withdrawing their children or financial support if the University proceeds with Greek desegregation.

### **D. Sanctions for Racial Discrimination in Selection and for Social Boycotts**

While sanctions should be reserved for extreme and recurring problems, denying an individual admission to a fraternity or sorority because of their minority status is an invidious act that should be met with University sanctions. Threats to socially boycott (e.g., refuse to date members of or hold social functions with) fraternities or sororities that want to integrate and actions that coerce individuals to socially boycott fraternities or sororities that do integrate are also invidious acts that should be met with sanctions.

### **E. Greek Accreditation**

Be it further resolved that the University re-institute the Greek Accreditation Program in which fraternities and sororities are expected to make progress toward racial inclusiveness within a timeframe. Timeframes should be sensitive to the genuine efforts and progress of Greek organizations and to the historical passivity of some

Greek organizations. Failure to make efforts or progress within reasonable timeframes should result in measures commensurate with the seriousness of the failure. Measures might include increased Student Affairs assistance in and oversight of desegregation efforts, more aggressive plans for desegregation, reductions in social functions (parties), limits on participation in intramural sports, and suspension from campus. Suspension from campus should be reserved for fraternities and sororities that are the most passive and resistant to desegregating the Greek system and for fraternity and sororities that arbitrarily discriminate against minorities. Although the Faculty Senate prefers that Greek desegregation occurs without force or sanctions, we recognize that, without such means as a final resort, desegregation has not occurred and minority rushees have been subjected to discrimination.

### **Faculty Involvement and Rewards for Involvement**

Be it further resolved that we the faculty extend ourselves beyond our admonitions to desegregate the Greek system to become a part of the team to help implement the changes necessary for desegregating the Greek system. We implore the faculty to attend Greek functions, to become advisors to Greek houses, to help identify students who might be interested in integrating fraternities or sororities, and to inspire inclusiveness by setting an example of inclusiveness. We further encourage the administration to demonstrate its commitment to the desegregation of the Greek system by rewarding faculty and staff who become involved in this important cause.

### **G. Commendations for Outreach**

Recognizing that Greek organizations at The University of Alabama have increased their interracial outreach in recent years, the Faculty Senate commends the interracial Greek Week teams, the interracial philanthropic activities, and the interracial dinner swaps among Greeks. We commend Alpha Phi Alpha, Delta Kappa Epsilon, Omega Psi Phi, and Pi Kappa Phi for their interracial social events. We commend the white sororities that participated in the National Pan-Hellenic Council step show and the fraternity and sororities that have eliminated their blackball systems. We also commend the Dean of Student's Office for its advice and inspiration for many of these activities and for conducting diversity training of Greek Presidents and recruitment officers over the past two years. We *especially commend* the racial integration that has occurred in the African-American sororities and fraternities and the Dean of Students' Office efforts to identify and cultivate existing Greek organizations that are committed to integration, students who might be willing integrate the white Greek system, and new fraternities and sororities that would colonize at UA as a racially integrated organizations.

### **H. Concluding Charge**

Believing that the majority of our student are not racist, the Faculty Senate implores our Greeks to let their conscience rise to the level of voice and action against the individuals, policies, and structures that prevent African-American and other minorities from realizing their rightful status on our campus. We implore the Greeks to stand tall against the forces of racism in the Greek system and to let no one stand alone in this struggle. And to this end, the Faculty Senate pledges its support and calls on Greek alumni, the national Greek organizations, University administrators and staff, and the citizens of our State to stand alongside the Greeks who step forward to bring about the changes necessary for desegregating the Greek system. Let us unite to open *all* the doors *within* The University of Alabama so that no student will fear or experience rejection because of the color of his or her skin or any other arbitrary physical characteristic. Let us unite to show all the people that the racially divisive forces that tarnished the image and reputation of The University of Alabama in the 20<sup>th</sup> century will not be permitted to restrain the open arms and warm embrace of The University of Alabama in the 21st century.

Adopted by the Senate August 28 2001