



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

April 22, 1998

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Andrew Sorensen
President

FR: John Martin, Chair
Greek Diversity Task Force

Members: Jeanette Berryman, Charles Brown, Mary Lynn Hanily, Jim Hayes, Johnny Johns, David Long, John Martin (Chair), Myron Pope, Hank Lazer, Kathleen Randall, Roy Ann Sherrod, James Taylor, David Nomborg, Melissa Acee, Geanious McCann, Tikki Hines, Harlan Foster, April McKenzie and Cody Robinson

RE: Recommendations for Action

President Andrew Sorensen charged the Greek Diversity Task Force ("Task Force") to study the current Greek System and submit to him an action plan that addresses the lack of diversity in the Greek System at The University of Alabama.

The Task Force acknowledges that an environment rich in racial, cultural, religious, ethnic and economic diversity reinforces the University's mission to produce well-educated, well-rounded citizens and enhances the education of all students.

Before reviewing the current state of the Greek System, the Task Force wishes to acknowledge the valuable contribution that fraternities and sororities have made to the history and success of The University of Alabama. Historically, the Greek System has been an integral part of The University of Alabama because of its attraction to prospective students, its development of campus, state and corporate leaders, and its contribution to the excitement and challenge of college life. The Committee does recognize that a lack of diversity within the current Greek System constitutes an unhealthy environment for its continued prosperity and for its role in developing leadership. It is apparent to the Task Force that the student population sees little urgency in focusing on diversity, especially in the Greek System. Therefore, certain steps are recommended to begin a process that will encourage the student population to recognize the need for and the value of a more diverse and inclusive campus. The long-term solution to the problem will involve students working with students. Short-term

opportunities to diversify membership should also be pursued vigorously. It is our goal to have the University of Alabama become the first university in the southeast to effectively diversify its Greek system.

The Task Force, with input from students, faculty, administrators and alumni, proposes the following action steps:

- I. Under direction of the President, the University will fund a substantial program ("Program") in diversity training administered by an outside entity experienced in such matters. The Task Force anticipates that the Program will be conducted by an organization such as the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) in Birmingham that has done extensive diversity training for Alabama corporations, Leadership Alabama and Leadership Birmingham. Diversity training will (initially) involve University administrators, Deans, faculty, SGA officers and personnel, all fraternity and sorority officers, key alumni and advisors, and will eventually include all student groups. Such training will form the cornerstone for an ongoing effort in education (in part, so that all students will recognize the perils of maintaining a non-inclusive Greek System, and so that they can learn the benefits of an open and diverse system). All new members will be required to participate in these training sessions annually.
- II. The President of the University will establish a permanent committee ("Committee") to oversee and encourage diversity on campus, with particular attention to diversity in the Greek System. This committee will be comprised of students, faculty, administrators and alumni. The Committee will be granted broad powers by the President both to reward groups for their diversity efforts and discipline groups for their failure to participate constructively. The Committee must submit to the President annually a report on the status of diversity for the entire campus and will once each year hold public hearings to allow comment from students, faculty and alumni concerning diversity on campus.
- III. The governing bodies (IFC, Panhellenic and Pan-Greek) will devise a plan ("Plan") of action for the Greek System to address and remedy the lack of diversity within the system. This Plan should have measurable goals and defined roles of responsibility. The Plan must be approved by the Committee and updated annually to reflect campus changes and expectations.
- IV. The President will establish incentives to reward chapters that succeed in taking steps to diversify their membership. All chapters would be eligible for such recognition.

- V. The Office of Student Life and student governing bodies will undertake efforts to reform the current structure of rush for fraternities and sororities to develop a more open and inclusive process. The Task Force suggests that consideration be given to the following:
- A. Create a delayed (after the start of the semester) or deferred (after at least one semester) rush which unifies rush for all fraternities and sororities.
 - 1. Study the financial effect of changes in the rush process.
 - 2. Study the cost of affiliation in fraternities and sororities.
 - B. Establish a single coordinating body for all fraternities and sororities
 - C. Enhance recruiting information by re-examining rush applications for all Greek organizations.
 - D. Encourage chapters to re-examine their selection procedures; comparisons should be made with the membership selection procedures of other university-sanctioned student organizations.
- VI. The Committee and the Plan should be in effect for the Fall Semester 1998 and any changes in the rush process suggested by the Office of Student Life should be incorporated no later than the Fall Semester 1999.