

Wednesday, April 29th, 2015

Dear Chancellor Loftin,

This letter is to inform you of the concerns the women of the Panhellenic Association (PHA) have about the recent proposal on the “Safety of Women Students in Fraternity Houses” brought to UM System President Tim Wolfe by the “MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium”. Below we will detail our concerns with each portion of the proposal; however, we are concerned by the very premise of this proposal. The goal is to address the safety of *women* students in fraternity houses, but the proposal was written by *men* who are not entrenched in daily campus, fraternity and sorority life. We believe that before any proposal is passed regarding our members, it is proper to do due diligence and investigate the merits of the suggestions before enacting them. We are asking you to consult with President Wolfe to ensure that policies made regarding our members are being created in our members’ best interest and with the opinion of student leadership within our community. Below we will discuss our views on the proposal in regards to our members:

MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s Proposed Policies

Policy One: “Women Students as Guests in Fraternity Houses”

We, the women of PHA, do not support this policy. We believe it is the right of individual fraternity members to have guests over to their place of residence regardless of time of day or the gender of the guest. By restricting women from certain locations under the guise of “safety”, this policy lends itself to the notion that women cannot make choices for themselves about their own safety. Additionally, this policy might inadvertently give men within fraternity houses the right or feeling of entitlement to treat women who do not abide by this rule as the men wish. This could lead to an increase in dehumanizing or making women counterparts inferior to the fraternity men. We do understand that this policy was suggested as a means to protect women from an unsafe environment. However, if women would be unsafe during the hours of 10 p.m. through 3 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, we implore fraternities to remove the members who are currently contributing to an unsafe environment and to recruit members who will not make an environment unsafe in the future.

Policy Two: “Social & Recruitment Events”

We, the women of PHA, support this policy. We believe that out-of-town social events and formals create certain “expectations” for guests of any gender that attend as a fraternity man’s date. By being expected to share a bed in a hotel with your date, a clear expectation is set. Furthermore, if any type of sexual violence were to take place on an out-of-town formal, the survivor would have very limited to no options in getting out of the situation that weekend. In terms of float trips, they are already prohibited per the University of Missouri’s Office of Greek Life and Interfraternity Council policy.

Policy Three: “Alcohol”

We, the women of PHA, support this policy. We believe that women twenty-one-years and older have the right to choose what alcoholic drinks they consume. Currently, however, the environment within fraternities does contain hard alcohol and underage drinking. We believe this atmosphere is not good for anyone’s health or well-being. By implementing a “beer only” policy at all fraternity houses, hopefully the amount of harmful, binge drinking will decrease, along with the physical and mental impairments that

it causes. We, the women of PHA, do offer one addendum, however. We believe that a ban should be placed on the possession of alcohol in areas of fraternity homes that are not “common areas” - namely, bedrooms - during parties and social events. We believe that this ban would protect guests of fraternity homes from being placed in an unsafe situation unknowingly. Though we support this portion of the proposal, we want to stress that in regards to safety for women in the realm of sexual violence, intoxication of either party does not serve as an excuse for a fraternity man to commit a non-consensual act. In addition, women should not have to be sober in order to guarantee their sexual safety against fraternity men. While alcohol and sexual assaults are statistically *correlated*, we want to highlight that alcohol does not *cause* sexual assault.

Policy Four: “Drugs”

We, the women of PHA, do not support this policy. To require our sororities to administer drug testing for all of our members is absurd and unwarranted. If a fraternity is concerned about drug use among their in-house members, they may administer drug testing on their own accord. However, to implement it via orders from the Office of Greek Life is overreaching.

MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s Proposed Implementation

“The Office of Greek Life will issue policies addressing women students as guests in fraternity houses, social and recruitment events and drug testing.”

We, the women of PHA, do not support this. The policies set forth here were not created through consultation with women students, so we do not deem all of them appropriate to implement. Additionally, these policies should protect all guests in fraternity houses, regardless of gender. Finally, the Interfraternity Council should be the governing body to implement any changes in policy, not solely the Office of Greek Life.

“IFC will issue a policy regarding alcohol.”

The Interfraternity Council already has a policy regarding alcohol. However, we, the women of PHA, believe that updating it with some of the suggested policies (and more policies that are created through dialogues amongst men and women students) would be beneficial.

“Fraternity house corporations will include provisions that address women students as guests in fraternity houses, alcohol and drug testing in their leases and house rules.”

Again, we, the women of PHA, cannot endorse this implementation strategy because we do not agree with all of the policies that the Consortium is suggesting.

MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s Proposed Education

“We will conduct a Sexual Assault Summit for all fraternity and sorority leaders as the first step in addressing sexual assault in the Greek Community.”

We, the women of PHA, agree that education is vital in combating sexual assault all across the University of Missouri community. However, specific steps need to be taken in order to effectively educate. First, sorority leaders do not need to be educated via a summit designed to educate men. The education blocks for men and women surrounding topics of sexual violence look very different. The Panhellenic

Association has been hard at work creating effective education and programming for *our* members. Second, we have faith that the current leadership in the Interfraternity Council is working on education and programming for *their* members. We believe that their meetings with the RSVP Center and Title IX Office will prove useful when planning this education, and the student-led factor will be a huge key to these programs' success.

“We will educate all freshmen and transfer students about sexual assault at the beginning of their first semester on campus.”

Again, we, the women of PHA, agree that education is vital and should happen early and often. We implore the Consortium to let the Interfraternity Council continue with their planning efforts for a comprehensive New Member Education for Fall 2015.

MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium's Proposed Monitoring & Enforcement

We, the women of PHA, disagree with this entire section on the principle that the Consortium's proposal should not be enforced. Despite the fact that we agree with some parts of the proposal, fundamentally we believe that it is an invalid document because it was created without consulting current fraternity members or the women it claims to create safety for. Moving forward, we believe that the Panhellenic Association and the Interfraternity Council, along with individual chapters, should continue to be the people working on combating sexual violence and working toward the safety of everyone in our community.

Chancellor Loftin, we, the women of PHA, urge you, President Wolfe and other University of Missouri administration members not to implement the proposal brought forth by the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium. The manner in which it was created is insufficient and many of the items suggested do not pertain to protecting women and all guests in fraternity houses. We welcome any discussion and discourse with our community about its safety needs.