

## **MGC Transformation Working Group**

The MGC Transformation Working Group has recommendations for action items to strengthen and grow the community within the Multicultural Greek Council at the University of Maryland. These action items result in long-term and short term care and support for the MGC. The working group acknowledges that because of the make-up of the council, and how quickly that make-up can change, the recommendations outlined are not recommendations that fit broadly across all organizations. Additionally, we understand that the responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations requires buy-in from the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life (DFSL), the university, the local chapter, national organization, and alumni volunteers.

While DFSL will determine the best mechanisms and means to implement improvements through collaboration with stakeholders, the recommendations below are meant to interrogate current practices as it pertains to supporting the Multicultural Greek Council.

It is important to note that while the Transformation Initiative, through the Division of Students Affairs was launched in May 2024, the Chair for the Multicultural Greek Council Working Group was appointed in July 2024 and the group was formed in September 2024. While the working group supports these recommendations, we also encourage consistent check-ins with the Multicultural Greek Council to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the most diverse council within the Fraternity and Sorority community.

### **5 Priorities**

1. Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement
2. Emphasize Safety and Accountability
3. Lead with Data
4. Highlight MGC Organizations
5. Enhance University Support

#### **Priority #1: STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There is a level of distrust between members of the Multicultural Greek Council and the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life at UMD. There is a need to develop trust between the University, the Department, Inter/National Organizations, Affiliated and Unaffiliated Organizations, Alumni, and Chapter Advisors. This rapport is critical to building a thriving successful community.

- **Clear Stakeholder Communication:**

- The Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life and the Division of Student Affairs should build upon the Newsletter that goes out to the community. The

newsletter should act as a one-stop show for volunteer advisors, where they can explicitly see what communications chapters received, what issues are arising within the council and across the fraternity and sorority community, and key staffing updates within the office.

- Additionally, it was mentioned that a clear calendar for upcoming events for MGC organizations would be beneficial to increase support for other MGC organizations.
- The Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life should provide clear updates to MGC chapters to ensure shared expectations and aligned goals, for chapter support and growth.

- **Inter/National Headquarters and Volunteer Engagement:**

- While many of the IFC/PHA and NPHC organizations have some paid staff members, the majority of the MGC organizations have no paid staff. When the University requires certain things from the Inter/National organizations, this puts an unjust burden on volunteers. University administrators should proactively engage National Organizations regarding any changes that come from this transformation initiative and how engagement will shift, allowing organizations time to take changes into consideration.
- Alumni Advisor meetings should be mandatory. Absent or disengaged Alumni Advisors increase risk and are a liability to the organization and institution. The recommendation is that Alumni Advisor meetings require representation from each MGC organization. Failure to attend a certain number of Advisor meetings should result in organization sanctions.

- **Clear Lines of Communication**

- DFSL should provide updated organizational charts and points of contact specific to MGC needs, this would allow for more streamlined communication from the organizations to the Department.
- While the DFSL organizes meetings for advisors, this calendar should be provided ahead of the academic year, so volunteer advisors can plan accordingly to be present.

## **Priority #2: EMPHASIZE SAFETY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

Members of MGC organizations would benefit from education regarding university policies, expectations, student conduct policies, and community standards that promote safe and positive member experiences.

- **Educational Workshops and Risk Management:**

- While DFSL requires programming around certain topics. There should be a level of individual accountability in the community. The Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life should utilize a Learning Management Software, that

would require affiliated individuals, and potential new members, to participate in online training. This LMS will also allow DFSL to facilitate ongoing training on student conduct expectations, peer accountability, and other educational opportunities. Furthermore, this LMS can be/should be tailored to the MGC council.

- **Conduct:**

- There is a sentiment that when an IFC/PHA organization has a conduct issue that the implications impact the entire fraternity and sorority community; however, when an MGC or NPHC fraternity/sorority has a conduct issue that the implications only impact that particular organization. The recommendation is that the DFSL and the Division of Student Affairs, be explicit in communication regarding which organizations are in the conduct process, and move away from community-based sanctions/moratoriums.
- In alignment with best practices, and the recommendations coming from IFC/PHA, The Office of Student Conduct should maintain accountability by providing transparent conduct updates that apply to all fraternities and sororities.

### **Priority #3: LEAD WITH DATA**

Much of the data available on the fraternity and sorority community at UMD is not disaggregated. Furthermore, there is a dearth in literature pertaining to Multicultural Greek Councils at Large Public State Institutions like the University of Maryland. For this reason, there is a need for data-collection, and an increased focus on data-informed decision-making to support MGC's ability to advocate for resources and measure success within Fraternity and Sorority Life.

- **MGC Community Metrics:**

- The Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life should collaborate with scholars and council leadership to develop a survey to collect data-points specific to MGC. The survey will cover a variety of aspects of the MGC experience, providing space for continued growth and improvement for the council and chapters, while also providing DFSL with areas of focus.
- The results of this survey should then inform resource allocation for the Multicultural Greek Council. The sentiment within the Multicultural Greek Council is that the MGC is the most resource scarce council. To rectify this, the data points from this survey should be utilized to assess current resource allocations and operational gaps specific to MGC to better address community needs.

### **Priority #4: HIGHLIGHT MGC ORGANIZATIONS**

The sentiment within the Multicultural Greek Council is that of invisibility. The council has organizations centering various identities, traditions, and cultures; however, these traditions are rarely highlighted across the campus. Promoting the rich histories of these organizations and contributions of the Multicultural Greek Council is essential for increasing visibility and encouraging growth.

- **Enhanced Public Relations and Marketing:**

- The Departments should work with the Division of Student Affairs Communication team and the University Communications team to highlight MGC achievements, programming, and values through official university channels and social media. This would amplify visibility into these organizations and garner interest from unaffiliated individuals.
- The Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life website needs to be more comprehensive and user-friendly. This is a website that should be a resource to all individuals, internal and external to the University. The DFLS website should be a “one-stop-shop” for up-to-date policies, trainings, data, news, events, and progress tracking.

- **Campus Space and Visibility:**

- While the majority of IFC/PHA have physical houses, in addition to the ability to reserve meeting space on campus, for MGC and NPHC organizations, reserving meeting space on campus is required for sustained operations. While the Agora house provides an option, it is a space that caters to multiple organizations within two councils.
- Agora House is a residential facility that is not ideal for meetings. The working group recommends the name Agora House be removed and the space be used as a residential facility for the Multicultural Greek Council. Given the rising price of rent in the DMV area, accessible housing being made available to students in the MGC would be beneficial. Additionally, naming the House the MGC House would explicitly bring attention and visibility to the Council.
- The NPHC has plaques placed outside of Stamp Union. There should be a space with plaques representing organizations within the MGC to increase visibility for the organizations. While the NPHC is restricted to the nine member organizations, the MGC Plaques should be inclusive of any culturally-based organization that has been recognized at the University of Maryland. Additional plaques should be created recognizing the umbrella organizations affiliated with these groups (National APIDA Panhellenic Association, National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, and the National Multicultural Greek Council). This will require archival work, but would also build visibility of organizations that are no longer on campus due to low membership.

- **Recruitment Strategies:**

- Any potential new member interested in Fraternity and Sorority Life should undergo an orientation which introduces each organization to the prospective members. Because students of color experience higher levels of belonging and connectedness within organizations that share their ethnic identity, it is important that students interested in Fraternities/Sororities see these organizations as options.
- DFSL should support the Multicultural Greek Council in ensuring that recruitment for these organizations be highlighted on the Website and social media. The DFSL website should feature an updated section specifically for MGC organizations, including event highlights, recruitment details, and leadership spotlights.

### **Priority #5: ENHANCE UNIVERSITY SUPPORT**

What sets the Multicultural Greek Council apart is the ways their identities are showcased in their traditions. If the University is truly invested in greater institutional support for the council, it needs to center the identity of these organizations.

- **Advising:**

- While the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the University of Maryland is larger than peer institutions, the MGC organizations have consistently felt that their advisors have not been able to truly understand the experience of the MGC council. An advisor who is affiliated with a culturally-based organization will help these organizations thrive.
- Additional support and advertising through the cultural centers. The university should explore ways to provide another layer of advising support through the cultural centers. This will not only continue to help organizations keep their identity at the core of their work, but also help create increased visibility for the organizations.

- **Training for DFSL Staff:**

- There is a need for the current staff within the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life to receive the training on the organizations in the MGC. This training would speak to the historical significance, and challenges that the organizations are facing.

- **Identity-Based Collaboration:**

- Because the Multicultural Greek Council holds membership with organizations that share a variety of identities, the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life should facilitate affinity-based caucuses, to facilitate collaboration. This could bring together all organizations that are Latinx/a/o/e or all organizations that are APIDA to discuss barriers that they are facing at the University. Additionally,

there is an opportunity to have all religiously-based organizations have a caucus to discuss how they operate and can support one another. These sessions can be facilitated by a staff member and help build coalitions across organizations.

### **Conclusion**

These recommendations reflect a commitment to strengthening the Multicultural Greek Council and ensuring that its unique contributions to the University of Maryland are valued and supported. By implementing these strategic actions, DFSL and university leadership can foster an inclusive, engaged, and thriving MGC community.