

## Discipline and investigations

No chapter or member ever wants to be the focus of an investigation. However, from time to time, violations of national policies are reported, so we must learn more about what might have happened.

In this issue, we discuss the various steps of an investigation, and what various terms mean. We hope these never become more than words to you – when there is a potential incident, that is a time that the activities of our Fraternity have parted ways from our values. However, your education today can help you become a

better advocate for activities that follow our Ritualistic values, our mission, and our vision as Kappa Kappa Psi.

If you have questions or concerns about practices, incidents, or future plans, contact me at [mmatney@umich.edu](mailto:mmatney@umich.edu). Your work now can prevent a lot of stress and headaches (or worse) later.

Have a great year, and keep those questions coming!

Malinda

### What happens in a chapter investigation?

When the National Council receives a credible report of a violation of national policies, it determines if an investigation should take place. If an investigation is started, a few steps take place:

- *The chapter is suspended.* This is not a punitive suspension, but rather a freezing of chapter activity to focus all efforts on moving through the investigation as quickly as reasonable.
- *An investigation visit takes place.* The National Council sends a representative of the National Fraternity (typically a Council member, Trustee, or Governor) to conduct an investigation. During this investigation, the representative may interview members or non-members and ask for copies of relevant documents. In some cases, the Fraternity may wait for a campus to complete its investigation, and may use the findings of that investigation to avoid duplicate efforts on everyone's part.
- *The National Council discusses the findings of the investigation.* The National Council will consider a

variety of perspectives in interpreting findings and deciding on future action.

- *The National Council makes a decision.* This can range from deciding that the chapter has not violated policies to finding that a chapter has violated them in the extreme. The National Council may assign a probationary period and a set of specific activities (to correct problems leading to the violations) which the chapter must perform prior to a further review and consideration by the National Council. In the most extreme cases, a charter will be removed.
- *The chapter completes the requirements of the suspension or probation.* The purpose of these requirements is to re-establish a healthy chapter on campus.

If an investigation takes place, your full cooperation will be expected. You have a role in supporting the work of the National Council so that the chapter and members in question can complete whatever activities are needed. Ultimately, the goal is to return all parties to the values of Kappa Kappa Psi.



## Kappa Kappa Psi

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### *What if you think a policy violation is happening?*

The journalistic "W"s (what, who, when, where, why) are useful if you find yourself witnessing a potential policy violation:

- *What?* What is the specific policy or harmful situation you identify?
- *Who?* Who, specifically, is involved? Who is the source of information?
- *When?* Take note of when (date and time) events are occurring.
- *Where?* Take note of where, specifically, the events are taking place
- *Why?* Note what rationale or reaction members give when explaining the situation.

One more W is important:

- *Write down* these elements as quickly as possible so that your memory doesn't fail. Everyone's perception changes

over time. Your immediate notes can preserve your recollection of the event. Remember that the more detailed and specific your notes, the more easily issues can be identified and resolved.

- *Act quickly*, to both write notes and report the situation. Waiting both obscures the facts and creates longer term headaches.

You should advise the group or individual(s) involved about your concerns that their actions are inconsistent with fraternity policy, rules or principles. You should recommend that the group or individual(s) stop the offending activity until clarification, authorization or approval. Do NOT make any threats or promises. Do not put yourself in a position of danger.

### *How can you prevent any of this from happening?*

There are steps you can take to make sure your chapter is never in this situation. As you plan any activity, ask yourselves these questions.

- *What is the purpose of the activity?* Does the purpose match the activity?
- *Do you have all of the rules of this activity in writing in advance?* Are behavior expectations and specific leadership roles detailed?
- *Have you checked with your sponsor or director and had a written plan for the activity approved?* So often requests for investigation happen when these campus leaders are not consulted in advance and in writing. If they can't explain your activity, you don't have their necessary support.
- *Have you examined campus rules and requirements?* Campus regulations and approvals matter – chapters must be in compliance with both Fraternity and campus regulations. These regulations

can change from year to year, so do check in annually.

Taking these steps helps you in many ways:

- *You can explain your event to others, and note anyone who has seen your plan.* This provides you with more support, and often with improvements to your event.
- *You have written steps for those replicating the event.* Future Brothers aren't "reinventing the wheel" when doing this event another year.
- *You prevent possible hazing or other violations from creeping in.* Without a plan, often future Brothers will try to "top" what you did before, making things "harder". This can happen incrementally without the intent of hazing, although hazing is often the result.

At the end of the day, we want you to have great events. These steps early prevent headaches later.