

Recommendations on Changes to Fraternity Recruitment

Presented to
Texas Tech University
Inter-Fraternity Council

April 2006

Overview of Report

Related to the decline in the number of men going through the Spring rush period the committee was asked to investigate alternative models of annual recruitment as well as issues of improved marketing for fraternities. Specific questions that were considered included:

1. Should the Spring formal rush activity be dropped completely? If not abandoned then how can the activity be altered so as to be more efficient?
2. Would going to a deferred Fall rush be of value?
3. What methods might be employed to help smaller fraternities attract interest if mandatory visitation was dropped?
4. What methods might be employed to better market fraternity membership among those men who are "maybe joiners" among potential rushees?

From 1972 until 1990, total undergraduate fraternity membership in the United States increased steadily. However, after 20 consecutive years of growth, total membership has since dropped steadily. After hitting a record of about 400,000 undergraduates in 1990, fraternity membership has plunged as much as 30 percent in the past decade, by some estimates. Many chapters have shut down because they've lost the bodies needed to financially support themselves.

A review of national statistics illustrates the problem. Theta Chi initiated about 2,400 members in 2000, down from 3,300 in 1989. In Alpha Tau Omega, the number of undergraduate members -- including both pledges and initiates -- plummeted by 31 percent, from 9,100 in 1989 to 6,300 in 1999. National officers at Phi Delta Theta say that their membership has dropped by 25 to 30 percent, primarily because the number of new members pledging the fraternity has fallen from 4,000 in 1989 to 3,100 in 2000.

It is clear that the number of men going through fraternity rush at Texas Tech is paralleling the national trends.. In the last three years the Tech numbers for Fall rush have dropped from 524 (2002) to 477 (2003) to 399 (2004) to 367 (2005) reflecting a 30% drop. Compounding the problem of reduced numbers of men going through rush are new fraternities at the university. In the last ten years there have been several new national fraternities colonized at Tech bringing the number of chapters present to 21. Thus, the local trend is to have more chapters competing for fewer members.

Question: Should Spring formal rush continue?

The committee concluded that having two periods of membership recruitment during the school year was needed however the current Spring rush system was ineffective and created a burden. The issue then moved to the question of how to modify the structure and process of rush so that flexibility in scheduling and participation were included while still maintaining an overall flow of interaction between rushees and the chapters.

An extensive Internet search was conducted in order to gather information about how other schools were involved in Spring rush. Information from a University of Georgia study is presented below concerning how a number of schools managed their rush periods.

The following is a brief summary of all information gathered in this study and provides a general overview of the findings.

□ Five out of 28 schools were found to have a distinct deferred recruitment system for fraternities and sororities. These included: University of Virginia, Northwestern University, Duke University, Cornell University, and University of Maryland– College Park.

□ Nine institutions have differing recruitment time periods for men and women; these periods ranged anywhere from summer to early in the spring semester, to no formal period at all.

□ Four institutions (26.7%) (of the 15 contacted by phone) reported plans to change the timing of their recruitment process.

□ The length of time allowed for formal recruitment spanned as small as 3 days, and as long as several weeks, depending on the institution. In some instances, fraternity and sorority recruitment periods were distinctly different within the same institution.

□ Out of 800 colleges and universities, 160 have a deferred rush system (20%), according to a recent membership survey by The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) (Farrell, 2005).

According to NIC Executive Vice-President, Jon Williamson, the majority of the 160 were private institutions (phone conversation, September 15, 2005).

SECTION I							
Benchmark of Greek Recruitment Systems							
<i>A synthesis of information gathered on each institution's process</i>							
ASPIRATIONAL INSTITUTIONS							
<i>Institutions highlighted in gray represent those without Fall recruitment. Fall recruitment is defined as the period from welcome week through the first month of school.</i>							
<i>Name of school</i>	<i>Type of system</i>	<i>Length of Sorority formal recruitment</i>	<i>Length of Fraternity formal recruitment</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Length of pledge/initiation period</i>	<i>Plans to change system</i>	<i>If yes, what are you changing to & when?</i>
University of Georgia	Fall	7 days	6 days			n/a	n/a
University of Arizona	Fall	6 days	6 days	Men have a more informal process and numbers have increased.	8-10 week average - not regulated by University	No	
University of California-Berkeley	Fall	7 days	7 days - Fall & Spring		N/A	Yes	Men - not changing; women - looking to defer process for either 3 weeks or an entire semester.
University of California-San Diego	Fall	Data unknown.	6 days				
University of Illinois	Fall	Two weekends.	Can start as early as over Summer, Fall and Spring (1st 6-8 weeks at start of semester).		No University stipulations - up to national organization 8 week average period.	No	
University of Michigan	Fall	7 days (13 day period)	8 days (9 day period).				
University of Minnesota	Different for Men and Women	5 days in Fall	No formal period				
Univ. of North Carolina Chapel Hill	Fall	8 days	7 days		8 weeks maximum	No	Already changed last year - decreased the length of formal recruitment for sororities and fraternity's - results are favorable.
University of Texas Austin	Fall	7 days	5 days				
University of Virginia	Deferred (Spring)	7 days	14 days over a 17 day period	The University works to align with NPC guidelines, keeps up with agreements.	No limit, varies.	No	
University of Washington	Different for Men and Women	8 days in Fall	No formal period.	Men - starts in May - informal.			
University of Wisconsin Madison	Fall & Spring	2 week period	3 week period.				
Northwestern University	Deferred (Spring)	8 days	8 days	Online recruiting - works well, deferred recruitment - pro-round recruitment in November, freshman freeze - no freshman allowed in houses for three weeks trying to change (faculty senate policy, so its hard to change).	Sororities - 6 weeks. Fraternities - vary. No University regulation. 9-10 weeks average.		
Duke University	Deferred (Spring)	8 days	18 days	Deferred system - recruitment is in Jan. and begins before classes resume. Been deferred to spring since 1995 and before that was deferred to after fall break.	8 weeks maximum.	No	
Cornell University	Deferred (Spring)	5 days	7 days		Varies but all initiated by April 15.	Yes	Fraternities - alcohol use.

SECTION I

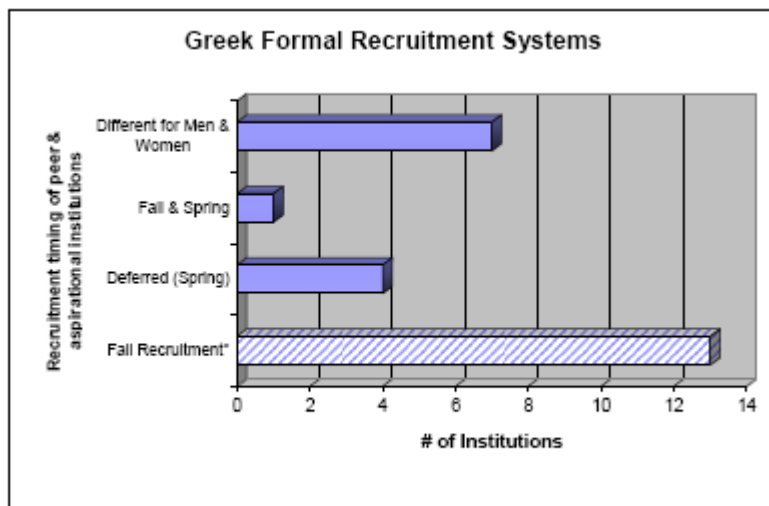
Benchmark of Greek Recruitment Systems

A synthesis of information gathered on each institution's process

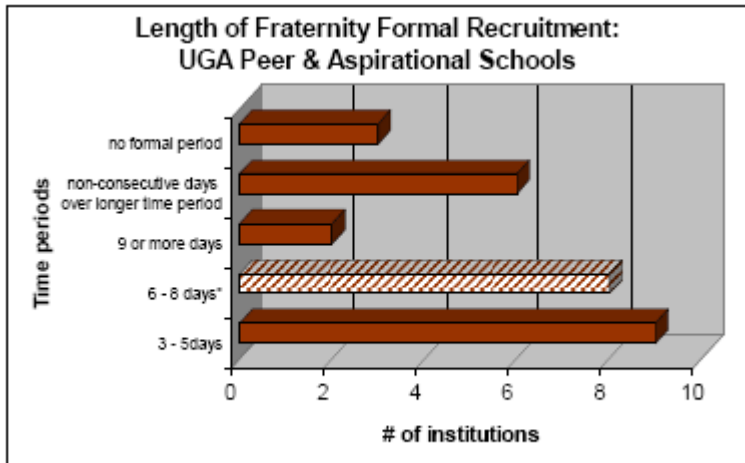
PEER INSTITUTIONS

Institutions highlighted in gray represent those without Fall recruitment. Fall recruitment is defined as the period from welcome week through the first month of school.

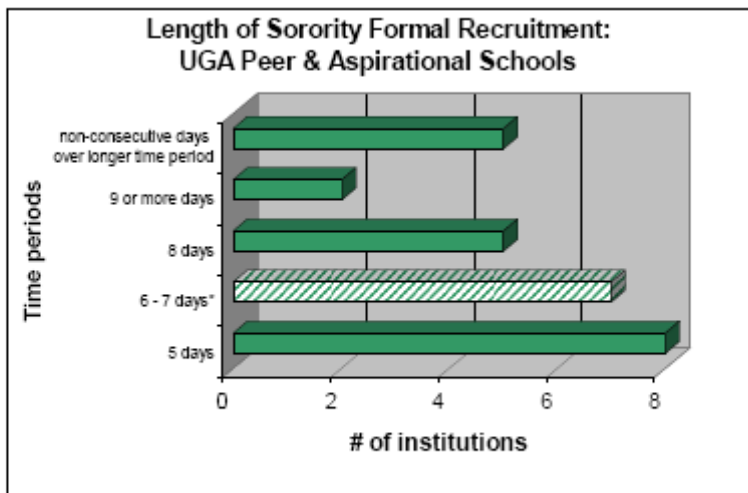
<i>Name of school</i>	<i>Type of system</i>	<i>Length of Sorority formal recruitment</i>	<i>Length of Fraternity formal recruitment</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Length of pledge/initiation period</i>	<i>Plans to change system</i>	<i>If yes, what are you changing to & when?</i>
University of Georgia	Fall	7 days	6 days			n/a	n/a
Arizona State University	Fall	5 days	8 days	Recruitment starts 2 weeks after school begins.	Pledge period not mandated by University - none of them are longer than 8 weeks.	No	Would like recruitment to begin before school but cannot because of University policy. Are against deferring to the Spring.
University of California Davis	Fall	5 days	5 days				
University of Colorado	Different for Men and Women	5 days - Spring	5 days - Fall & Spring		1-2 months, varies by organization.	Yes	Proactively promote a system that works together with reduced levels of competition.
Indiana University Bloomington	Different for Men and Women	7 days (November thru January).	3 days in Fall.	Men have open recruitment except first 2 weeks of Fall semester to allow freshmen time to adjust.		No	
Iowa State University	Fall	6 days	No formal period.				
University of Iowa	Fall	6 days	5 days				
University of Kansas	Different for Men and Women	8 days in the Fall	4 days in the summer.				
Univ. of Maryland College Park	Deferred (Spring)	10 days January to February.	6 days	Students must have 12 credit hours before they can join. Informal recruitment goes on all year.	6 weeks.	Yes	Men are in beginning stages of discussing change - not sure to what.
Michigan State University	Fall	5 days	4 days		Based on organization.	No	
University of Missouri	Fall	7 days	5 days				
University of Nebraska	Different for Men and Women	5 days in the fall.	Summer - informal.		Varies.	No	Uninvited sorority affiliation of recruitment counselors last year.
North Carolina State University	Fall	6 days (10 day period).	5 days (8 day period).		Within 8 weeks.		Have considered deferred but have not for financial reasons - chapters can't afford not to have houses full.
Texas A&M	Fall	5 days	5 days - Fall & Spring		Varies.	No	Women - change to preferential rank sororities, men - hope to change to a more formal process.
Virginia Polytechnic University	Different for Men and Women	2 weekends in Spring.	12 days in Fall.		12 weeks, 12 credits and 2.0 avg.	No	



* Indicates recruitment period for UGA



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Recommendations on conducting Spring Rush

The committee recognized that modifications to the Spring formal rush period were greatly needed. With fewer men signing up for the formal rush in the Spring it was felt that participation in the activity should be made voluntary for the fraternities. A second major change would involve allowing rushees to only visit those fraternities that they wished. As opposed to the mandatory visitation to each fraternity that is followed in the Fall rush it was recommended that rushees be able to elect which chapters they visited.

The Spring rush week would contain the following events:

Sunday: Recruitment Forum

Monday: Open House 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday: Open House 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Invitation Function 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Thursday: Invitation Function 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday: Pref Day 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday: Bid Day

The following components of a new format for Spring rush are presented below.

Recruitment Forum (Sunday)

The Rush Forum will be held on the Sunday during the second week of the Spring semester to give prospective fraternity men the opportunity to learn more about joining an IFC fraternity. Held somewhere on campus there will be extensive advertising of the upcoming event with notices in the Daily Toreador, posted flyers, and targeted mail-outs to potential members. The mail-out will provide for selective targeting of men including freshman who did not previously pledge, those who went through Fall rush but did not pledge, upper classmen, and such groups as the honor college.

During this event, the IFC Rush Chair will facilitate a presentation covering the IFC, the IFC fraternities, and the rush process. Members of the IFC will also present to answer questions posed by attendees and each chapter will have booth space available. Invitations to open house activities will be handed out. Guidelines for the week will be explained and the men registered. Information about each open house will also be posted on the Internet. The rushees will be enrolled into the ICS recruiter web site data base that evening or before if pre-registered.

Open House (Monday and Tuesday)

Open House will occur that Monday and Tuesday during the week after the recruitment forum during the evening hours of 7:00-9:30 PM. Chapters may elect to host events for one or both evenings. Rush schedules listing all of the open house times will be given to the rushees at the recruitment forum as well as being available on-line. Rushees will be responsible for visiting at least two chapters each night (this was based on a desire to include some prompting to visit different fraternities) but can go to as many houses as they wish. To verify attendance the rushee will be required to have their rush card signed at each chapter house. Rush captains will be present at these functions and will facilitate the documentation for each rushee. During this time, every participating IFC fraternity welcomes all rushees. There are 21 fraternities, each unique in its own regard. In order to value what every fraternity offers, rushees are encouraged to visit as many houses as possible during Open House.

Invites (Wednesday and Thursday)

Following Open House, rushees are offered invitations for events that Wednesday and Thursday evening that are organized by the individual fraternities. Cross cuts will take place such that the ICS Recruiter web site will be utilized to determine the guest list for these events. Rushees are not required to visit any more houses than they wish from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. As with the open house activity individual chapters may elect to offer events for just one or both nights. These events allow for a better review interaction and are based around a mutual selection process between the rushees and the fraternities. Just as rushees are choosing the fraternities that best suit them, fraternities are choosing the members that are best suited for their brotherhood.

Generally, during the invite round events target a smaller group, allowing the rushees to personally spend more time with the individual fraternity members. Rushees should try to return to those fraternities where they most enjoy the company of the surrounding brotherhood. The invite rounds allow rushees to gradually meet more brothers while also meeting their fellow underclassmen, ultimately leading them to the IFC fraternity that is the best fit.

Pref Day

Final Hours occurs on Friday night from 7:00-10:00 PM. It resembles Open House in appearance, but at this point, the rushee will now know not only most of the brothers of the fraternities he likes, but also many of his fellow rushees. Cross cuts will take place using the ICS site to generate the guest list. This is the last

opportunity for rushees to ask questions relative to that particular fraternity and also to meet any remaining brothers before Bid Day. At 10:00 PM, the rushees must leave the fraternity houses. The individual fraternities then deliberate and choose the rushees to whom they will extend bids.

Bid Day

Bid Day allows fraternities to deliver the results of their deliberation to the IFC. The bids are then cross-matched by IFC with the final selection announced and the man signed to the fraternity at a meeting that Saturday morning. If a rushee accepts a bid, he typically returns to the fraternity that afternoon or evening for a social event hosted for the new members.

Question: Should a deferred Fall rush be adopted?

While the rush committee was open to alternative models of rush there was a general consensus that the current Fall rush week used at the university was sufficiently functional as to not need such a major change. Some of the comments solicited from committee members or from Internet searched revealed the following:

COMMON CONCERNS OF DEFERRED RECRUITMENT (taken from UG report)

Most of this information was drawn from student newspaper articles and Greek organization Websites.

Concerns of Greek students opposed to deferred recruitment:

- Money, specifically less dues for chapter income.
- Less student interest.
- Pushing it back could become slippery slope (conspiracy theory).
- “Dirty rush” (underground).
- Infringement on rights of organizations (perception of university telling students what to do).
- In many cases, alums react stronger against it.

Concerns of administration considering deferred recruitment:

- Involving students in the process.
- Even with students involved, it can still be seen as a mandate.
- Powerful Greek alumni base is likely to oppose it.
- Having definitive and logical reason why change is necessary.

Recommendation: At this time the rush committee does not support the adoption of a deferred Fall rush. Reasons for this are as follows:

REASONS WHY NOT TO DEFER

1. Deferred rush creates a semester long, underground, uncontrolled rush that hinders the intellectual climate. Peer institutions with deferred rush support this finding.
2. Students much prefer a one week period of controlled rush to 15 weeks of uncontrolled rush.
5. No national fraternity or sorority supports deferred rush.
6. Speculation exists that a legal challenge might be mounted if Texas Tech adopted deferred rush (first amendment freedom of association).
7. Groups would suffer considerable financial difficulty with deferred rush due to lower membership numbers and increased social expense.
8. The review does not support the argument that Fall term pledging negatively affects achievement or retention.

Question: What methods might be employed to help smaller fraternities attract interest if mandatory visitation was dropped?

While still including a mandatory visitation to each fraternity during the Fall rush activity the committee considered what methods might be employed to help chapters distinguish themselves and provide greater appeal to potential members who might not be familiar with the smaller groups. Offering a method of distinction will be of particular importance in the proposed Spring rush model where the rushee will be free to visit as many (or as few) chapters as he wants.

An Internet search seeking to assess how fraternities differentiate themselves for marketing purposes found a growing trend of using a rating system to establish criteria of excellence that gave potential members information about the chapter. Duquesne University followed a standard of designating a chapter as a Five Star, Four Star, Three Star, Two Star, or One Star organization. Awards can be given to the highest-scoring fraternity and publicized on the campus.

Web sites with programs similar in concept to what the committee is proposing include:

<http://muweb.millersville.edu/~greek/docs/GCAT.pdf>

<http://www.udel.edu/student-centers/FandS/cap.html>

<http://www.clarkson.edu/ofsa/core.html>

<http://www.greeklife.duq.edu/pdfs/fiveStarEval.pdf>

Areas of review might include an evaluation and rating of chapters in:

- *academics
- *financial management
- *chapter management
- *university/community/alumni relations and service
- *campus involvement
- *membership intake and education program

As such a rating system would be new to the university campus it is recommended that any such system be voluntary and the results of such an evaluation would only be made public upon the consent of the chapter.

Recommendation: That the IFC appoint a special committee to further research this concept of “chapter excellence” and make recommendations back to the larger body

Question: What methods might be employed to better market fraternity membership among those men who are “maybe joiners” among potential rushees?

The committee noted that problems in communication created difficulties not only during the actual weeks that rush activities went on but throughout the year among the general Greek community. It was felt of extreme importance that information be easily distributed among both the leaders of individual chapters as well as the advisor’s circle and other interested parties. In recognition of this the following recommendations are offered:

The following recommendations for improvement in communication are:

1. It is important that directories of individuals be developed so that it becomes possible to easily transmit information across groups of members including
 - a. A single email address for IFC officers that distributes to that group;
 - b. A single email address for Advisor’s Circle members as above;

- c. A single email address for chapter presidents and vice-presidents as above;
- d. A single email address for rush chairmen and asst rush chairmen as above;
- 2. A primary event calendar on-line is created that can be easily updated as well as secondary calendars for the various fraternity, university, and other programming;
- 3. A library of collected meeting minutes for IFC and committees that could be easily referenced is placed on-line for ease of access;
- 4. A review is conducted of the possible improvement in the presentation of fraternities in all materials sent to students interested in Tech;
- 5. A review is conducted of the possible improvement in the presentation of fraternities at the freshman orientation sessions;
- 6. An investigation is made of the possibilities of obtaining the email addresses of incoming students;
- 7. Development of a recruitment web site is suggested that can be easily updated that will serve to coordinate communication between current fraternity members, IFC, the Advisor's Circle, and representatives of the university. A second core mission of the site will be to provide a dynamic connection for those potential members and their parents who might visit the site.

The committee generated some general ideas about improving the image of fraternities through various projects. These are presented below:

Solving the Problem: Idea-Sponsoring activities across fraternities

Goal: To increase the interaction between fraternity members, alumni and potential members by offering a "leadership academy" that features successful fraternity alumni and the potential for career networking and advancement.

Method: Hold a several day event annually that features a variety of workshops, speakers, and possibly job fairs designed to assist our members in business network and skill set development.

Step One: Set a 2-3 day schedule of events during either the Spring or Fall. Develop a list of successful alumni by contacting the chapters and then make contact with those men about their interest in being involved in the academy. Once the pool of talent is known then establish the curriculum of the academy and course content.

Step Two: Organize a press packet so that media coverage is secured and prominent and then begin several months before hand to generate interest for the event among our fraternity members. Whether the event will be open to the general university will need to be determined by the recruitment committee. Perhaps a "request to attend" methodology could be used to see if potential members could be identified.

Step Three: Seek involvement and registration from fraternity alumni who might have an interest in the value of such programming for themselves. Such a person attending might be drawn to become more involved in the fraternity community in other ways.

Step Four: Obviously there are a mountain of details in the production of such an endeavor but suffice it to say that the next step is to hold the event and then take note of what worked and what different and document it for the next year and do it all again.

Solving the Problem: Idea-reach out to younger friends of new members

Goal: To reach out with a positive message about fraternities through an existing personal relationship between new members and young men who they knew back in their home towns or schools.

Method: During the pledge-ship period of each semester the recruitment committee would distribute or otherwise seek completion of a form identifying names of friends of the pledge that are still attending high school or have otherwise not joined a fraternity but are attending classes at Texas Tech.

Step One: Distribute a form via the IFC representatives or email the link for this form that is on the recruitment web site to the chapter presidents, fraternity educator, or other identified member with involvement with the current pledged members.

Step Two: Assemble the contact information for these men and make contact with them via surface mail, email, or personal contact. Encourage them to find out more about fraternities by visiting the web site or through other active pursuit.

Step Three: As it will not be known if the men contacted who are still in high school will come to Texas Tech it will be important to follow up with a cross-reference of incoming freshmen and those attending the freshmen orientation to see who does come to the campus from that list. Then a second communication attempt can be made inviting them to find out more about fraternities while attending the orientation or when otherwise arriving on the campus.

Solving the Problem: Idea-reach out to other organizations

Goal: To identify and recruit talented men of good character and strong academic abilities for fraternity membership

Method:

Step One: Go through the registered student organizations and develop a list of their advisors. Also develop a list of university contacts personally known to our local alumni who might have knowledge of the men we want to seek out.

Step Two: Contact these “gatekeepers” and advise them of our goal of wanting to collect information about what men of quality want from a college organization and ask that they provide us with the names of 3-5 men (not already affiliated with a fraternity) whom they believe represent the best from their group. Dr. Carr and other alumni will be primarily responsible for this contact.

Step Three: Contact the men on the list derived from step two and ask them to meet with a small team of our members for the purpose of completing a structured interview. The idea is not to rush them at this point but merely to collect their impressions of fraternities and what are important qualities that they would look for in such an organization. The team consists of 2 undergraduates with possibility 1 alumnus. The group meets for coffee or a meal where possible with the interviewee and the information is collected. If the man is clearly not interested in fraternities then no further contact is made after the interview. If they appear to have an interest then we move to the next step.

Step Four: At this point the man is identified as a potential member. He is contacted by a group of alumni/undergrads who take him to a nice restaurant and go over what the fraternity has to offer. As it remains to be seen what are the qualities most desired in a fraternity by these men the offer for membership may be altered as needed to attract their interest. Assuming continued interest the potential member is then brought into a larger group consisting of other potential members and they are hosted to a social function at an alumnus' home.

Step Five: The potential member is offered an invitation to join and pledges one of the groups.