

[1963 May 22]



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
ALBANY 9, NEW YORK

To: Faculty and Students

This memorandum reports the action of the University Council in defining the role of fraternities and sororities on our campus; I take this means of reporting to you in order that information may be shared as promptly and as widely as possible.

Last Friday, May seventeenth, I received the report of the committee appointed to consider the role of fraternities and sororities in the State University at Albany. A policy based upon the finding and recommendations of this report was considered by the University Council on Tuesday, May twenty-first. The statement of policy adopted by the Council is as follows:

"It is our conclusion that fraternities and sororities, properly constituted and regulated, should have a role on the new campus. Their function should be clearly understood to comprise more than that of mere social organizations. A congenial group of students, associated by bonds of mutual respect, similar interests and aspirations, and motivated by concern for each other and for the University, can exert a beneficial influence upon the morale of the whole student body. In so far as fraternal organizations help to develop qualities of mature judgment, leadership, individual initiative and intellectual competence in their members, they promote the best interests of the University.

The fraternal groups themselves can insure their continued existence by their contribution to the ideals and purposes of the University. Responsibility for maintaining acceptable standards of academic accomplishment and social decorum of their members, individually and collectively, will rest squarely upon the group. If they accept the responsibility, they will have justified the confidence placed in them by the University administration and the University Council."

This statement of policy was based on three major principles adopted by the Council

1. The University should recognize and support only those social, academic, fraternal, and recreational organizations whose objectives are consistent with the purposes of the University.
2. The University should establish regulations governing the existence of these organizations and procedures for supervising their activities, to assure realization of the stated objectives.



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3. The University should recognize and respect the right of each student to extend or limit his personal involvement in the organizational life of the University community.

The development of this policy on the new campus would center on three principal steps:

1. All University student organizations, including fraternities and sororities, will be housed in University buildings, and have food service provided by the University; presumably, these facilities will be provided on the new campus.
2. Any chartered student organization may apply annually for group housing privileges in University residence facilities.
3. During the period May, 1963, through May, 1965, progress of each fraternal group toward fulfilment of objectives consonant with University purposes will determine its eligibility for housing privileges on the new campus.

In the formulation of this policy, the Council made clear its conviction that all student organizations are to meet the standards of the University and shall be chartered by the University. Further, the Council provided that any organization may retain its charter so long as it provides convincing evidence of fulfilling its stated objectives. The University will provide for an annual evaluation of these organizations, and will develop policies affecting their activities. University supervision will be assigned to maintain close working relationships with the groups so designated.

The Council noted that many students feel the need for small-group identification, and see fraternities and sororities as meeting this need. At present about a third of the student body belongs to these groups. Fraternal groups can serve this purpose but other social, academic, community, religious groups can also meet these needs and achieve worthwhile objectives in a University community of organizations.

The Council under section three hundred fifty-six of the education law, and in accordance with rules established by the State University Trustees, has responsibility both for the review of all plans for the "appraisal or improvement of student activities and housing" and for making "regulations governing the conduct and behavior of students", and prescribing for and exercising "supervision over student housing and safety."



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The implementation of this policy will be a responsibility of the Dean of Students, and will, of course, require extensive planning and the development of explicit standards and procedures. Much of this detailed work will not be possible to complete until next fall, especially since full opportunity for the participation of students in the development of the new procedures will be important for their success.

In the period of transition continued assistance will be required by the organizations in meeting their financial responsibilities and in the disposition of physical properties. This will, of course, be provided.

All elements of our university have much to gain from an effective and orderly implementation of the Council's policy; we count on their full cooperation.

Sincerely,

Evan R. Collins
President

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May 22, 1963