

Working Group on IFC Culture, Prevention, and Accountability
August 6, 2022

Executive Summary

Background

In November 2021 following allegations of sexual violence and misconduct in some Interfraternity Council chapters, the Provost created the [Working Group on Interfraternity Council \(IFC\) Culture, Prevention and Accountability](#). The Working Group, comprised of student leaders, faculty, and staff, convened two times per month from November through April, including a half-day Saturday retreat in March. After multiple working sessions and a review of literature and best practices, the Working Group identified immediate opportunities to enhance the partnership between the university and the IFC community. Based on these opportunities, the Working Group established a [preliminary action plan](#) that eligible IFC chapters¹ had to complete before resuming social activities that had been paused as a result of the events in Fall 2021.

During the implementation of the [preliminary action plan](#), IFC student leaders demonstrated a commitment to continual growth and improvement. Student Affairs updated the community on IFC chapter compliance with the preliminary actions on the [Student Affairs Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development website](#). The website was updated weekly throughout the Spring 2022 semester.

The preliminary action plan:

- [Expanded Fraternity and Sorority Event Review Committee](#) to address chapter-specific risk management plans and North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) Alcohol and Drug Guidelines.
- Increased communication and collaboration with the university [including pre-, mid-, and post-event discussions related to risk, security, and compliance](#).
 - Established IFC Risk Team to [provide on-site assessment and support to IFC chapters hosting social events at their facility](#); with the team visiting each fraternity during their events and meeting with them afterward for accountability follow-up.

¹ As of January 14, 2022, four IFC chapters were on a university Interim Protective Measure and a fifth chapter was on a modified Interim Protective Measure. These chapters were encouraged to fulfill the requirements of the preliminary action plan but could not resume social activities due to EEO-TIX investigations.

- Updated policies related to alcohol in social environments and strengthened expectations for event security.
- Piloted — through USC Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) — a semester-long Mental Health and Violence Prevention (MVP) Peer Health Educator Program, with 25 Panhellenic and IFC leaders participating as MVP Chairs; these Chairs facilitated 54 presentations during their weekly chapter meetings.
- Ensured chapters achieved 100 percent compliance of all required prevention education courses before permitting social gatherings.
 - RSVP facilitated 35 extra workshops for 500 IFC members; evening and weekend workshops were made available for IFC members in addition to the regularly scheduled workshops accessible to all students; RSVP accommodated this work by expanding from four to 16 staff members.
 - As of March 9, 2022, all eligible IFC chapters (9) were in compliance with the required prevention education course requirements.
- Created an Individual Member Agreement putting ownership on individual fraternity members to understand all relevant policies, standards, and processes; this agreement is now a requirement for all members of an IFC organization officially recognized by USC.
- Hired a Compliance Coordinator in USC Student Affairs to oversee and track compliance education, policies, and guidelines.
- Identified areas to strengthen support for student organizations including creating stronger expectations for advisors for all student organizations.

Ongoing actions and planned future actions include:

- A Fraternity & Sorority Strategic Leadership Committee will launch in Fall 2022, to be led by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Committee will continue to implement the 2019-2020 Fraternity and Sorority Safety Priorities and will evaluate progress and next steps to support culture, prevention, and accountability.
- USC Student Affairs and USC Student Health will convene an expanded Sexual Violence Prevention Committee to address greater sexual misconduct awareness beyond the IFC and USC Panhellenic Council communities and make recommendations for a multi-year action plan across the university.
- USC Student Affairs, USC Student Health, Academic Programs, and Enrollment Management are currently collaborating with campus partners to discuss learning outcomes, delivery methods, and cadence of university prevention education coursework.
- RSVP will continue to operate the Campus Coordinating Response Team (CCRT) with campus partners to oversee the development and implementation of policies, prevention initiatives/efforts and responses to address sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, with a tailored and particular focus on LGBTQ+-identified students.

- Beginning with students enrolled for the Fall 2022 semester, any student who has not completed the prevention education modules presented by RSVP will incur a registration hold for the following fall or spring semester.
- All incoming and continuing students are required to take the online prevention module before classes start in Fall 2022.

The university approaches this work as a shared commitment, and responsibility among students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This work is ongoing and will continue into the 2022-23 academic year and beyond. Community education will expand to include speakers and other special events. Our website, [Commitment to Change](#), will communicate the latest information using direct messages and updated FAQs. We are steadfast in our commitment to working together to combat sexual misconduct on campus.

Report

Elevated Standards

The university took several steps in the Spring 2022 semester aimed at increasing safety and security at IFC-related events. In January 2022, the university launched an expanded Fraternity and Sorority Event Review Committee to conduct both semester and weekly planning meetings. In addition to pre- and post-event assessments with the committee, an IFC Risk Team provided on-site inspection at social gatherings. The Working Group also updated Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development's (FSLD) event hosting guidelines with a revised list of expectations for security companies at events and a ban on bulk quantities of alcohol, such as kegs.

When examining possible conditions for eligible IFC chapters to resume hosting social gatherings, it was clear to the Working Group that social environments within the community required greater attention to safety planning and risk prevention. Consequently, as each chapter completed its preliminary required actions and became eligible to host social gatherings, the new Fraternity and Sorority Event Review Committee met with each chapter to assess chapter-specific risk management plans with a focus on event safety, and to ensure community understanding of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) Alcohol and Drug Guidelines.

In addition, the IFC Risk Team — made up of IFC chapter officers, executive board members, USC Department of Public Safety, and USC Fire Safety & Emergency Planning staff — was established to provide on-site assessment and support to IFC chapters hosting social events at their chapter facility. The team visited each fraternity during their events to confirm alignment to

policies and to document notes for follow-up and accountability. If an event was not meeting requirements, the IFC Risk Team, chapter leadership, and the USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) ended the event and documented details for a post-event meeting discussion. Some events were shut down due to noise complaints, but not due to violations of the preliminary action plan conditions.

The Working Group also updated policies related to alcohol in social environments, published in the FSLD “[Event Hosting Education Program Spring 2022 Revisions](#).” Common sources of alcohol, including bulk quantities (i.e., amounts of alcohol greater than what a reasonable person should consume over the duration of an event, like a keg), are now prohibited. In addition, the Working Group decided that while chapters have previously been required to hire security for events to support their risk management plans, they are now required to meet revised expectations for the security company, including:

- Wristband distribution for those over 21 and identification of those under 21.
- Security guard placement at entrance and exit points, and at stairwells and hallways leading to bedrooms.
- Utilization of license scanners to screen for fake identification.
- Meetings with DPS to align expectations.
- Establishment/implementation of a ratio of security guard to guest (DPS suggestion of 1 guard for every 40 guests).

In addition, before and after each social gathering, each chapter implemented advanced risk, security, and compliance reviews in collaboration with the university:

- Pre-event: These meetings covered risk prevention plans, event set-up, permit requirements, noise ordinance guidelines, accountability, education to members and guests, pre-event walkthroughs, and a review of the NIC Alcohol and Drug Guidelines.
- During the event: The IFC Risk Team was on-site and provided direct feedback to chapters. These notes were shared with the staff running the post-event meetings. Additionally, the DPS Party Response Team stopped by, unannounced, during each event. Those officers were also present at the post-event meetings.
- Post-event: These meetings included a discussion of the risk and event plan implementation, and a summary of what went well and what needed adjustment for future events. Key items for review included: proper entrance and exit pathways, wristband distribution, security guard placement and expectations, high-visibility vests for chapter-level Risk Teams,² alcohol distribution and type, music levels and speaker placement, and access to non-common areas secured by security guards.

The pre- and post-event meetings resulted in significant benefits for the IFC organizations:

² Each chapter had its own risk team in addition to the council-wide IFC Risk Team.

- IFC chapter leaders took ownership of their responsibility to improve events with an eye to safety and well-being.
- Students were receptive to feedback from the USC DPS, Fire Safety, and Student Affairs. They owned when their events had areas of improvement and consistently sought advice from campus partners to improve their future events.
- Students appreciated receiving constructive feedback and many organizations successfully incorporated new safety parameters and adjustments resulting in better executed events and overall positive feedback from the IFC Risk Team, students, and campus partners. For example, they managed egress around chapter facilities during events, worked with their DJs ahead of time to avoid noise complaints, and refrained from renting concert-level equipment.

Enhanced Prevention Education

The university developed a pilot program aimed at increasing the role of students in prevention education. Representatives from Panhellenic and Interfraternity councils participated in a Mental Health and Violence Prevention (MVP) Peer Health Educator pilot program developed by USC Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services. Students were trained in topics related to mental health, diversity, equity and inclusion, sexual violence, and what USC services are available to support students. The fraternity and sorority members presented on these topics to their peers throughout the Spring 2022 semester.

Currently, all IFC members must complete the following prevention education requirements:

RSVP Prevention Education Workshops

- Trojans Respect Consent – 1st year students
- Healthy Relationships – 2nd year students
- Trojans Act Now – 3rd year students

Student Affairs Hazing Prevention Online Trainings

- Hazing 101 Module
- Fraternity & Sorority Life Hazing Prevention Module

In addition, USC Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) piloted a peer health educator program in Spring 2022. Representatives were recruited from each Panhellenic (10) and IFC (15) chapter to be Mental Health and Violence Prevention (MVP) Chairs. These students participated in a semester-long program of educational training and leadership

development to enable them to promote mental wellbeing and violence prevention within their chapters.

MVP Chairs spent 12 hours in training sessions on a range of topics, including “Impact of Gendered Expectations,” “Implicit Bias and Microaggressions,” “Trojans Respect Consent,” “Trojans Act Now,” “Stress Less,” and “Suicide Prevention.” MVP Chairs facilitated a total of 54 presentations on these topics in their weekly chapter meetings and members completed 1,499 assessments after these discussions. Students suggested that a renewed MVP program should occur in-person with weekly one-hour meetings, with additional topics related to mental health such as mindfulness and burnout. Finally, students requested more opportunities for individual mentorship to help implement the discussed topics into the culture of their chapter and ways for the program to incentivize student engagement over time. Following this successful pilot, the university has expanded the program to all fraternity and sorority councils for the Fall 2022 semester.

As of this fall, all incoming and continuing undergraduate, graduate, and professional students must complete required online [Prevention Education Modules \(PEMs\)](#) before the start of classes on August 22, 2022. The online modules are available through Trojan Learn (trojanlearn.usc.edu). This training program contains vital information regarding expectations for student conduct, how to access on- and off-campus support resources, and shared language that reinforces our community’s values. **Students who do not complete the training by the August 22 deadline will be subject to registration holds affecting their ability to add classes for the Fall semester and register for the Spring semester, in addition to fines and other compliance measures.**

Improved Compliance

The Working Group partnered with several offices to establish a compliance verification process for chapter members within the Interfraternity Council, culminating in the hiring of a Compliance Coordinator in April 2022. Early in the Spring 2022 semester, RSVP facilitated 35 workshops targeted specifically to IFC members in addition to the regularly-scheduled workshops for all students. RSVP was able to accommodate these additional opportunities for compliance due to its significantly expanded staffing over the past three years. In addition to the workshops, IFC members were also required to fully complete two online modules on hazing, as well as an Individual Member Agreement.

At USC we believe that safe and healthy relationships are nurtured with the development of personal skills related to complex aspects of student life. In addition to the mandatory PEMs all students this year, two additional modules are required for students who join recognized

fraternities and sororities (Hazing Prevention 101 and Fraternity & Sorority Life Module), and compliance for these trainings is tracked by USC Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development (FSLD) and Campus Activities.

Throughout Spring 2022, chapters were only permitted to hold social gatherings when 100% of its members had completed all required prevention education courses. RSVP facilitated 35 additional workshops for 500 IFC members, including evening and weekend options. These sessions were in addition to the regularly-scheduled workshops offered to all USC students, which were also available for IFC members. Compliance was tracked by RSVP, Student Affairs, and the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance. As of March 9, 2022, nine chapters reached compliance and were allowed to host social gatherings in the Spring semester.

In addition to the accountability structures already in place during Spring 2022 through Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS) and Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX), the IFC follows a model of self-governance both with a council-level standards board and chapter-level judicial boards. After examining current practices, the Individual Member Agreement was created to place ownership on individual fraternity members to understand the policies, standards, and processes. The Individual Member Agreement is now, and will continue to be, an official requirement of all new members of an IFC organization. This spring, USC required each current and new chapter member to sign the new agreement to strengthen individual accountability with community standards, reinforcing: their commitment to community behavior expectations; the accountability process via their chapter judicial boards and SJACS; and the requirement to immediately report any behavior contrary to university guidelines.

The Working Group joined with USC Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development (FSLD), Campus Activities, USC Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP), and the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance to develop the compliance verification process. For ongoing oversight and implementation of these requirements and overall compliance required for all student organizations, Student Affairs hired a Compliance Coordinator in April 2022 reporting to the Assistant Director of Campus Activities. The coordinator will focus on the continued oversight and tracking of compliance education, policies, and guidelines.

Next Steps

The Working Group acknowledges that while many new steps have been taken, the progress must continue. To that end, the Working Group recommends USC Student Affairs units collaborate closely with the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX (EEO-TIX) and USC Student Health on ongoing assessment of the university's prevention education requirements, as well as clarifying responsibilities for designated employees. Expectations for both student organization advisors and students involved with FSLD will be clearly defined in addition to launching the Fraternity & Sorority Strategic Leadership Committee in Fall 2022.

Prevention Education

The Working Group provided suggestions regarding areas that could be strengthened for FSLD prevention education, including, clarity on the learning objectives and means for embedding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in all training; strengthening the focus on equity within training; the need to better engage campus stakeholders in curriculum development; and the need to develop key metrics to measure success of the FSLD prevention education for all fraternity and sorority members across the five councils. The FSLD staff worked closely with EEO-TIX to incorporate these suggestions into Fall 2022 planning.

Recognition

The standards of recognition for IFC chapters are outlined in the FSLD [Standards and Accreditation](#) document and via the [MOU](#) with Campus Activities. The Working Group identified areas to strengthen support for student organizations specifically around the role of the advisor. The FSLD and Campus Activities team will work together to update the MOU and create stronger expectations for advisors for all student organizations. The expectations will outline the responsibility advisors have to guide student organizations with an eye to policy and healthy group dynamics. In addition, the designated employee reporting responsibilities that apply to staff and faculty advisors will be clarified in collaboration with EEO-TIX. These expectations will be shared with IFC Chapter Headquarters staff.

Accountability

The team has shared input with Student Affairs regarding potential updates to the group responsibility expectations set forth in the new USC Student Handbook with respect to safety and risk prevention. The Working Group examined and proposed edits to the FSLD Developmental Plan Matrix, a document that outlines expectations for fraternities and sororities and details the standards management plan between FSLD and SJACS. The feedback from the Working Group was used to clarify, edit, and strengthen the matrix to align with the upcoming issuance of a new USC Student Handbook. The matrix will be a training tool used with fraternity and sorority leaders to understand the university accountability process and the need to follow

university processes before enacting their self-governance standards utilizing their judicial boards. Through trust building and open communication, the FSLD professional staff will support student leaders in reporting potential student misconduct to the appropriate university officials while initiating their own self-governance processes when appropriate. Past issues of organizations allegedly handling misconduct internally without reporting to university officials will be addressed through training, clarification of roles, the post-event review process, and regular communication with professional staff.

Fraternity & Sorority Strategic Leadership Committee

To further implement the [2019-2020 Fraternity and Sorority Safety Priorities](#), the Fraternity & Sorority Strategic Leadership Committee will launch in Fall 2022. To ensure representation from diverse voices, the committee will include students from [all five fraternity and sorority communities](#), subject-matter experts, and individuals with authority to assess trends and determine action steps for addressing accountability and well-being goals. Led by the Vice President for Student Affairs and FSLD, the committee will evaluate the progress and next steps to supporting culture, prevention, and accountability.

Broader Campus Work

The university continues to be committed to tackling the broader issues of sexual assault and misconduct, excessive drinking, and drugging. To facilitate this work, the university has established several efforts and committees to support ongoing prevention efforts that impact the entire student community.

Sexual Violence Prevention Committee

USC Student Affairs and USC Student Health will convene a group to address sexual violence at the university level. Currently including many campus stakeholders, the group is set to expand to include faculty and students. Expanding on work started in 2017, the group will use the following data to suggest recommendations for a multi-year action plan:

- [AAU Campus Climate Survey](#)
- [USC Wellbeing Collective Consent & Healthy Relationships](#) Logic Model
- [USC Student Wellbeing Index Survey](#)
- [RSVP Prevention Education Modules](#) pre-and post-evaluation surveys

Prevention Education Committee

USC Student Affairs, USC Student Health, Academic Programs, and Enrollment Management are currently collaborating with campus partners to discuss learning outcomes, delivery methods, and cadence of university prevention education coursework. The team is evaluating how the university may evaluate, reframe, and build first-year prevention education. The scope of this

work includes [all university prevention education](#), including the courses required of IFC members.

Coordinated Community Response Team

With a grant from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, in February 2020 RSVP and campus partners formed the Campus Coordinating Response Team (CCRT) to oversee the development and implementation of policies, prevention initiatives/efforts and responses to address sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, with a tailored and particular focus on the LGBTQ+ student cohort. The CCRT includes approximately 30 members from campus partners including USC Student Affairs, Department of Public Safety, USC Student Health, Undergraduate and Graduate Student Government, Office of Threat Assessment and Management, Campus Support and Intervention, EEO-TIX, and more.

Increased Communication

- The [USC Commitment to Change](#) website was expanded to include a section on [Addressing Sexual Assault](#), including resources, frequently asked questions, a response to the Academic Senate Executive Board, and community-wide messages. To address student questions, the university created [Student FAQs](#).
- In November 2021, the university hosted speaker Jackson Katz, Ph.D., for a public discussion titled “Violence Against Women is a Men's Issue.” Katz outlined conceptual frameworks and practical tools for engaging men in the prevention of sexual assault and relationship abuse. One key goal of this presentation and corresponding IFC-focused training was to help IFC leaders develop the skills to address sexual assault and relationship abuse prevention more proactively and effectively in their sphere of influence, both in their leadership positions on campus and in their personal and professional lives, now and in the future. This discussion was live-streamed and held in Bovard Auditorium.
- In April 2022, the university hosted a [public discussion](#) framed around the concept of “sexual citizens.” The idea comes out of the most comprehensive study to date of sexual assault on campus conducted by the Sexual Health Initiative to Foster Transformation (SHIFT) at Columbia University. Columbia professors and authors of the book, “Sexual Citizens: Sex, Power and Assault on Campus,” Jennifer S. Hirsch and Shamus Khan shared powerful insights from their work in several sessions with campus groups. The authors engaged campus stakeholders in a working meeting to discuss opportunities to address power disparities among certain groups of students. And, senior leadership, including deans and senior vice presidents, met with the authors to discuss their findings and consider options and ideas for our own campuses.

Conclusion

The Working Group members were a dedicated group of faculty, staff, and student leaders collaborating to make a significant impact on the culture of IFC organizations. This effort resulted in not only strengthened compliance, accountability, and prevention education, but also a stronger partnership with student leaders and national representatives. The insights gathered by the Working Group over the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters will inform USC's ongoing effort to build and strengthen an IFC culture of collaboration dedicated to prevention, recognition, and accountability. With over 4,000 students participating in fraternities and sororities across USC's campuses, this community serves an important role in many of our students' sense of belonging. We know that this work to combat sexual misconduct will benefit our entire community of students.