Dear Fraternity and Sorority Alumni:

I hope this letter finds you well. It has been an exciting semester in Fraternity and Sorority Life and for the University of Maryland, with lots of changes since last year. If you haven’t been on campus lately, then you may not recognize the place anymore! The university has started construction on several new buildings, including the new St. John’s Teaching and Learning Center on McKeldin Mall which will replace the old Holzapfel Hall. You may have also heard we’re halfway through our first season in the Big Ten! Not only did the men’s soccer team win the Big Ten championship, but our football team is bowl-bound! And for those who remember buying their books at the Book Exchange on College Avenue, you’ll be saddened to know it’s been torn down and replaced by a six-story apartment complex with retail businesses on the first floor.

And speaking of building – Fraternity and Sorority Life has been building on the momentum of last year’s successful Centennial Celebration, including hiring two new staff members! The first week of August we hired Nathan Barrera-Bunch to serve as the Program and Advising Coordinator for the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the Multicultural Greek Council. After finishing his Master’s degree at Florida State, Nathan served with Semester at Sea for six months before coming to College Park. Nathan specializes in social justice, and we are thrilled to have him on the team. We were also excited to welcome Reggie Jackson to staff the second week of August as the Associate Director of Development for Fraternity and Sorority Life. Reggie served as a development officer for the previous ten years at the University of Virginia. In this new position, Reggie will be coordinating our development efforts and has already helped establish five scholarships in our Greek community. And finally, although he technically doesn’t count as an employee, Luke Edwards joined our team when Associate Director and Maryland Alum (’02) Corin Gioia Edwards gave birth to a bouncing baby boy in September! We hope you will join us in congratulating Corin on our newest member of the fraternity community when you see her!

In addition to adding new staff, we’ve continued enhancing fraternity and sorority life on campus. Here are a few of the other things happening in the community this semester:

- The Interfraternity Council implemented a new IFC Tailgate program for each of the five home football games, drawing crowds of between 1,500 – 3,000 members and guests;
- The Panhellenic Association voted to bring another sorority to campus – Gamma Phi Beta will return to campus in the Spring 2016;
- Founded in 2003, the United Greek Council voted to change its name to the Multicultural Greek Council and initiate a comprehensive restructuring process; and,
- The National Pan-Hellenic Council donated the proceeds from their Homecoming Step Show to the Divine Nine Emergency Tuition Assistance Fund.

In addition to Gamma Phi Beta, several other chapters have recently joined our community, including: Alpha Delta Phi; Delta Tau Delta; Phi Delta Sigma; Tau Epsilon Phi; Zeta Beta Tau; and coming this spring, Delta Upsilon. Not counting ΓΦΒ and ΔΥ, we currently have 58 recognized fraternities and sororities at UMD.
Other exciting updates from 2013-14 include:

- Continued growth in membership (we exceeded 4,000 members last spring for first time)
- Brought in nearly 1,500 new members last year (double what we brought in ten years ago)
- Raised nearly $400,000 for philanthropies and provided over 25,000 hours of service
- 49 of our 54 recognized chapters had a GPA above 3.0
- Over 1,500 Greeks had a 3.5 or higher, landing them on the Dean’s List
- Approximately 25% of Greeks are students of color
- Approximately 45% of Greeks work full- or part-time
- Approximately 1 in 3 Greeks volunteer off-campus
- Over 25% of Greeks study abroad

We have also spent a great deal of time this semester monitoring the national landscape related to fraternity and sorority life on college campuses. Like many of you, we are acutely aware of recent issues involving fraternities and sororities, with coverage in *The Atlantic, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Rolling Stone* magazine, and countless other sources questioning the value and relevance of fraternities and sororities and scrutinizing our activities and behavior. With the help of talented student leaders and dedicated alumni advisors within the community, we believe *fraternity and sorority life at the University of Maryland is robust and thriving*. Through the 21 staff members we have working specifically with fraternities and sororities on campus, we continue to provide proactive education and awareness around the issues of sexual assault, alcohol and drug use and abuse, hazing, and other risk management areas.

One example of our commitment to supporting the community can be found in the fact that we have employed a graduate assistant (50% FTE) since 2008 who coordinates sexual assault prevention efforts within fraternity and sorority life, including oversight for the Ten Man Plan and Ten Woman Plan programs. Members from each participating chapter meet for one hour once each week for ten weeks with a trained facilitator. The purpose of the TMP/TWP is to raise awareness around the issue of sexual assault within a specific fraternity or sorority. Topics include: bystander intervention; what is rape culture; healthy relationships; effect of sexual assault on survivors; and connecting survivors to resources. The goal is to identify a critical mass of men in a fraternity or women in a sorority who care about the issue of sexual assault and who want to change the culture within their chapter, fraternity and sorority life, and the greater campus community. This semester alone, we have 14 chapters – approximately 180 Greek students – participating in TMP/TWP programs; eleven fraternities and three sororities. Chapters have participated in over 100 TMP/TWP programs since its inception in 2003. And last year, 96% of chapters (52 of 54) completed a sexual assault prevention program.

There’s just not enough space to tell you everything that’s happening in fraternity and sorority life on campus, so I hope you’ll visit us this spring and see for yourself! We continue to embrace the motto from our Centennial – Honor the Past, Celebrate the Present, and Ensure the Future. As the calendar year comes to a close, we hope you will consider making a gift to Fraternity and Sorority Life to help us ensure the future of one of the premier fraternity and sorority communities in the country. It is your support that allows us to continue to provide exceptional service and development to the community. Thank you for your help in making this year so successful, and we hope you enjoy the holiday season and have a Happy New year!

Fraternally,

Matthew Supple
Director

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