

**Dean of Students Office**

February 27, 2015

To: Stephanie Knight, Assistant Director, Center for Campus Involvement

From: Laura Blake Jones, Dean of Students

Cc: Susan Pile, Director of Michigan Union and Center for Campus Involvement

**Issuance of Official University Decision for SOAR Complaint #15-105**

Receiving the Recommendation of the Greek Activities Review Panel (GARP) from the Center for Campus Involvement (CCI) regarding Student Organization Complaint #15-105 on February 16, 2015, I write to communicate the OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY DECISION on this matter.

Complaint #15-105 was filed against Sigma Delta Tau Sorority with the CCI under the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations*. The Director of the Michigan Union and Center for Campus Involvement gave the parties notice that a complaint was filed and established a reasonable and mutually agreed upon time for a response and supporting documentation to be submitted. After review of the file, the Director of the Michigan Union and Center for Campus Involvement determined that a hearing conducted by GARP was the most appropriate option for resolution.

The hearing was held February 11, 2015, before a properly convened GARP Hearing Panel. The Accountability Procedure Manual dictates that the Dean of Students has 10 days from receipt of the Panel's recommendation to issue the Official University Decision to the parties in writing.

**Today, I write to inform you that the Official University Decision is a two-year Disciplinary Suspension and Restricted Activities through Fall Term, 2017.** We are extremely disappointed by the reprehensible behavior that occurred, the failure of groups to come forward with information regarding the individuals responsible for the damage, and the collective inaction of bystanders within the participating groups. We strongly believe that individuals should accept responsibility for their actions.

**Details of the Official University Decision follow in four parts:**

- Statement of Authority's Recommendation (Recommendation of the GARP Hearing Panel)
- Statement of the University Decision
- Statement of Sanctions
- Rationale for Changes

I. **Statement of Authority's Recommendation :**

**(Exact wording of the findings of the GARP Hearing Panel)**

“On February 6, 2015, the Center for Campus Involvement (CCI) received an official complaint filed by Madeline Walsh against the primary contact of the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority, Jessica Klein. The complaint was filed in response to a ski trip to Treetops in Gaylord, Michigan with Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity over the weekend of January 16. Included in the complaint was a description of the details of the event, including the number of attendees and the reported damages, as well as a list of relevant media coverage of the ski trip. Damages were noted to be estimated at \$100k and included “broken windows, thrown furniture, knocked beer cans through the walls, broken glass in rooms, broken ceiling tiles and excessive trash.” A number of additional details were also listed in the complaint, describing egregious public intoxication, use of marijuana, and other public disturbances. The complaint alleged that Sigma Delta Tau was in violation of the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations* due to the events of the ski trip.

On February 6, 2015, CCI notified Jessica Klein, the primary contact of the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority, of the complaint that was filed against the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority. CCI also sent notification of an expedited timeline option for both parties at this time. On February 9, 2015, both parties agreed to follow the expedited timeline. On February 10, 2015, Jessica Klein submitted a response to the complaint to CCI, including Sigma Delta Tau's plan to contest the allegations.

On February 11, 2015, a hearing was conducted in response to the complaint. The hearing was adjudicated by the Greek Activities Review Panel and proceeded according to the formal resolution process in the *Accountability Procedure Manual*.

After deliberation, the GARP Justices have found Sigma Delta Tau to be in violation of the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations*. According to the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations*, Section IV.A.3, a Registered Student Organization is responsible for a violation of the *Standards of Conduct* if a member's actions, which contravene the *Standards of Conduct*, have been explicitly or tacitly approved by the organization. During the hearing, it was noted that Sigma Alpha Mu compiled a list of all members from the fraternity and sorority who had paid to attend. Additionally, it was noted in the hearing that 120-135 members of Sigma Delta Tau attended the trip. The GARP Justices find this range to constitute a significant portion of Sigma Delta Tau's 216 member roster. Given the list of women who had paid to attend and the significant portion of women in attendance, the GARP Justices find that these conditions satisfy the definition of a co-sponsored event. SEMP Article II.A.2.ii. states that “Putting a chapter's roster or significant portion of it on a guest list” constitutes co-sponsorship. The GARP Justices therefore find the ski trip to have implicit approval from Sigma Delta Tau. The *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations*, Section IV.B addresses contradictions of the values of the University that are subject to corrective action under the *Standards of Conduct*. Among the various types of action

subject to corrective measures, the GARP Justices unanimously find Sigma Delta Tau's actions to be in violation of the following provisions:

1. Health and Safety – This provision states that RSOs must not foster, promote, or participate in activities that unreasonably threaten the safety or well-being of their members, other people, or animals. During the hearing, it was noted that the accommodations used by Sigma Alpha Mu and Sigma Delta Tau were well over capacity and that excessive drinking took place over the course of the event. These conditions created a dangerous environment that threatened the well-being of both members of the organization and guests at the resort. The GARP Justices therefore find Sigma Delta Tau in violation of the Health and Safety provision.
9. Violation of the Student Organization Constitution – This provision states that RSOs are bound by the constitution submitted during the recognition process. Any organization that violates their published constitution, is in violation of these Standards of Conduct, even if an amendment has been made and submitted, but has not yet been approved. Article I.2 of the submitted constitution for Sigma Delta Tau states that “It shall be the purpose of this fraternal organization to form a close social and fraternal union of those of similar ideals and to foster, maintain, and instill such ideals in the hearts of its members as will result in actions worthy of the highest precepts of true womanhood, democracy, and humanity.” The events of the ski trip, such as the excessive damages and other dangerous behaviors, constitute a failure of the organization to uphold its given standards. The GARP Justices maintain that this therefore violates the Violation of the Student Organization Constitution provision.
11. Adherence to Law – This provision states that RSOs must adhere to federal, state, and local laws. It was noted that underage drinking and marijuana use took place over the course of the ski trip and therefore violate the law. The GARP Justices maintain that this therefore violates the Adherence to Law provision.

In accordance with the above findings, the GARP Justices recommend the following sanctions:

1. Sigma Delta Tau is to follow any and all recommendations from their national organization.
  - a. It is important that the chapter maintains strong bonds with the national organization and complies with all rules and recommendations set forth by the national organization. During the hearing, it was noted that the national organization has yet to hand down an official report to the chapter, however the GARP Justices feel that the national organization recommendations will complement the recommendations of the panel.
2. Any and all individuals are to be held accountable by the University of Michigan, the national organization of Sigma Delta Tau, and the Michigan State Police, where applicable.
  - a. This will act as a deterrent effect for any subsequent similar behavior. Individuals must understand that their actions will carry repercussions for not just the organization at large but for themselves as well.

3. Sigma Delta Tau is to complete three different types of educational sessions during the Winter 2015 semester: bystander intervention, risk management and sexual misconduct prevention.
  - a. It is clear that the incidents from the ski trip resulted from lack of proper risk management and the failure of individuals to intervene with the dangerous behaviors that caused the damages. It is the hope of the GARP Justices that by having Sigma Delta Tau participate in these educational sessions its members will be better equipped to deal with similar situations in the future and prevent negative outcomes. We expect Sigma Delta Tau to seek out sessions facilitated by the university. No less than 60% of the chapter must attend these sessions as well as all attendees of the ski trip. Completion of the sessions must be confirmed by Madeline Walsh, the President of the PanHellenic Association.
4. Sigma Delta Tau is to complete 15 hours of community service per member this semester.
  - a. The actions of the organization tarnished the Greek community as well as the greater University community. By completing these community service requirements, the organization will begin to mend its relationship with the community and make it an overall better place. If Sigma Delta Tau already has requirements for its members in this regard, this condition of 15 hours will be concurrently satisfied (one hour of service as per chapter requirements counts towards one hour of the 15 required by this sanction). Community Service hours must be confirmed by Michael Kubik, the Judicial Vice President of the Interfraternity Council and presiding justice of the panel.
5. Sigma Delta Tau is to be placed on social probation from the notice of these resolutions until April 21.
  - a. This is to include off campus events, such as formals, as well. The GARP Justices believe that the probationary period will allow the organization to spend time strengthening their risk management strategies and focusing on productive chapter involvement in the community. Philanthropy events will not be prohibited in this probation as the panel finds that this would be counterproductive. The goal of these resolutions is to not simply punish for wrongdoings, but to modify behavior and help better the organization in the process. The organization must complete all education requirements prior to April 21. If the requirements are not met, social probation will last until they are completed.
6. Sigma Delta Tau is to make an apology at all four Greek council meetings by April 1.
  - a. The actions of the organization affected not just the PanHellenic Association, but the entire Greek community. The GARP Justices maintain that an apology to all Greek councils will help mend the relationships between the organization and the councils. This must be confirmed by Madeline Walsh.
7. Sigma Delta Tau is to “exceed expectations” in all categories of the Achievement Expectations for the Winter 2015 semester and at least “meet expectations” in all categories of the Achievement Expectations for the Fall 2015 semester.
  - a. The Achievement Expectations are an essential piece in quantifying the good work that Greek organizations do. By enforcing that the organization meets expectations in all categories the organization will concurrently help the

- community, strengthen its risk management, educate its members, etc. Further, this will help bring the organization back into good standing with the community.
8. Sigma Delta Tau is not to participate in any more off campus overnight joint fraternity/sorority events indefinitely.
    - a. The GARP Justices believe that these types of events are major risk factors and have great potential for dangerous behavior, as demonstrated by the actions of Sigma Delta Tau. Prohibiting these types of events will reduce these risks. This provision does not apply to formals, but rather explicitly or implicitly co-sponsored off campus overnight events.
  9. Sigma Delta Tau is to complete an internal membership review by the national organization.
    - a. A membership review will allow the chapter to identify individuals who are not fit to continue membership with Sigma Delta Tau because of their lack of adherence to the stated values and standards of the organization. It was noted in the hearing that a membership review was to take place. Confirmation of the completion of this review is to be provided to Michael Kubik.
  10. Sigma Delta Tau is to make an education presentation at the Fall 2015 Social Meeting of Interfraternity Council and PanHellenic Association Chapter Officers in collaboration with Sigma Alpha Mu.
    - a. At the beginning of each semester, members of the IFC and PanHellenic Executive Boards host a meeting regarding social policy and risk management within the Greek community. This meeting is mandatory for the president, risk manager(s), and social chair(s) of every IFC and PanHellenic chapter. Sigma Alpha Mu and Sigma Delta Tau will design an educational program on risk management specific to off campus trips and bystander intervention within Greek life. The completed program must be submitted to the Office of Greek Life for review. Through designing and presenting the educational program, the organizations will continue to consider the damaging nature of its actions and initiate the process of eradicating actions of similar nature from the Greek community.”

**Rationale for Sanctions Recommended by the GARP was provided by the panel as follows:**

“These recommended sanctions are the product of considerable deliberation by the GARP Justices. The GARP Justices believe these sanctions to be appropriate for the violations. We also believe that the sanctions and resolutions are a start in mending the tarnished reputation of the both the Michigan Greek community and the University of Michigan’s reputation as well. We hope these incidents not only will start a conversation on risk management and alcohol awareness, but that we will learn from these incidents and prevent them from occurring in the future.”

**(Conclusion of the exact wording of the GARP Hearing Panel)**

## II. Statement of University Decision

The University accepts the findings of the GARP Hearing Panel under the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations* which determined that Sigma Delta Tau Sorority was found to be in violation of: #1 - Health and Safety; #9 - Violation of the Student Organization Constitution; and #11 - Adherence to Law. The University finds the decision rendered by the GARP Hearing Panel to be thoughtful, well-reasoned and consistent with well-established expectations and practices within Greek Life at the University of Michigan that outline behavioral expectations of community members and define co-sponsored events.

## III. Statement of Sanctions

The findings of the GARP Hearing Panel under the *Standards of Conduct for Recognized Student Organizations* underscore the importance of individual and collective accountability for this incident. While the sanctions GARP outlined summarized earlier in this document may have been sufficient and appropriate in a situation where the individuals involved were taking responsibility or, where chapter officers were providing information about individual accountability to the University, this is not true in this instance. In addition, representatives of Sigma Delta Tau sorority have continued to attempt to distance themselves from group accountability in this situation. This action on the part of the sorority has served to magnify concerns about the organization.

**Given the extreme nature of behaviors that occurred and failure to take group accountability in this incident, the Official University Sanction in this matter is: a two-year Disciplinary Suspension and Restricted Activities through Fall Term, 2017. The University also requires the current officers/other members of the organization (as defined below) to attend meetings scheduled by the Dean of Students with the Dean and/or Associate/Assistant Deans of their respective schools and colleges to discuss University expectations of leadership and accountability.** These educational conversations will occur no later than April 21, 2015. Officers and other members included in these conversations are: president, vice president, treasurer, philanthropy/service chair, risk manager, social chairs 1 and 2, recruitment chair 1 and 2, new member educator, scholarship chair, panhel delegate and trip organizer.

*As defined in the Standards of Conduct, Disciplinary Suspension involves separation of the student organization from the University for a period of at least one semester and Restricted Activities involves restricting the student organization's ability to access University-controlled benefits and resources.*

The University sanction of Disciplinary Suspension removes Sigma Delta Tau sorority from active membership in the Panhellenic Association for two years and limits the group's ability to engage in recruitment and all social activities. During the period of suspension, Sigma Delta Tau's Panhellenic delegate must participate as a non-voting member of the Panhellenic council. Service, educational and philanthropic activities may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

The University directs CCI to place Sigma Delta Tau sorority on Disciplinary Suspension and Restricted Activities through Fall Term, 2017. Additionally, should Sigma Delta Tau Sorority wish to request to have

the duration of these sanctions modified or seek full re-instatement at the end of the two-year suspension, the University expects the sorority to comply with the following conditions:

1. To accept group accountability for behaviors that occurred at the Treetops Resort on January 16-18, 2015, primarily focused on the groups' failure to engage as active bystanders in this incident. Sigma Delta Tau must recognize that by attending and participating in the weekend's events it bears responsibility for the events of the weekend, independent of the scope of individual accountability members of the organization may, or may not, have had for the specific damages.
2. Members of Sigma Delta Tau Sorority must accept and comply with the implementation of sanctions levied upon the chapter for these behaviors by their national organization.
3. Full and complete restitution to Treetops Resort for damages would occur and be confirmed by Treetops Resort.
4. The chapter would outline their significant and substantive progress to enact change in the culture of their organization related to taking responsibility for collective behavior at events.
5. The chapter would voluntarily participate in restorative measures involving a community impact dialogue and a significant community service project designed and implemented within the resort area community as conceptualized by the Office of Student Conflict Resolution.
6. All chapter members would participate in extensive alcohol and other drug abuse prevention education; expanded bystander intervention training (to include learning about why bystander intervention skills were ineffective during the referenced weekend); risk management education; and, sexual misconduct prevention education. The content of each of these training programs would be reviewed and approved in advance of implementation by specified campus subject matter experts as determined by the Dean of Students.
7. Off-campus residential addresses of all chapter members would be supplied to the Dean of Students and updated each semester during the period of Disciplinary Suspension to allow for independent confirmation of any calls for service at these locations ensuring prohibited social events, as defined by the Social Events Management Policy (SEMP) are not being sponsored by members at alternative locations.
8. Regular meetings to occur between the national organization and the Dean of Students prior to removal from Disciplinary Suspension.
9. All sanctions outlined by GARP in this decision letter would be implemented and those unable to be implemented during the period of Disciplinary Suspension would be implemented following Disciplinary Suspension during a specified probationary period.

#### **IV. Rationale for Changes**

It has been established that members of Sigma Delta Tau sorority behaved in direct contradiction to the expressed purpose of their organization, which is:

*"It shall be the purpose of this fraternal organization to form a close social and fraternal union of those of similar ideals and to foster, maintain and instill such ideals in the hearts of its members as will result in actions worthy of the highest precepts of true womanhood, democracy and humanity."*

The failure to enact bystander intervention behaviors by members of the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority over the weekend of January 16-18, 2015, at Treetops Resort was reprehensible and contributed to the destructive behavior which caused extensive harm to the communities of Gaylord, to the University of Michigan and to Greek Life as a whole.

This egregious behavior and failure to act are inconsistent with the University of Michigan's standards of conduct for student organizations and for members of the student body. Similarly, failure to acknowledge group accountability for chapter members' collective actions when traveling and socializing together as a group is not acceptable. We expect more of our students who have the privilege of associating with the University of Michigan and are deeply disappointed by the failure of these students to initially live up to our collective values and then to continue to distance themselves from accountability for their actions.

We remain committed to using all means available to hold individuals accountable.

I would like to thank the members of the GARP panel comprised of representatives from all four Greek Life councils, who served as the Justices in this case; and, the President of the Panhellenic Association who served as the complainant in this matter for the unwavering leadership they have demonstrated in responding to this unprecedented and extensive harm by members of Sigma Delta Tau Sorority in this instance. Your collective leadership in self-governance and accountability serves as the foundation for the future of Greek Life at the University of Michigan.

Submitted February 27, 2015



Laura Blake Jones, Ph.D.  
Dean of Students