

CRISIS RESPONSE AND MEDIA SUPPORT

ANTI-FRATERNITY CAMPUS ACTIVISM

There are a growing number of anonymous social media accounts on North American campuses calling to eliminate Greek life. This resource serves to prepare chapters on campuses with a history of or potential for anti-fraternity activism.

ACTIVISM LIFE CYCLE

Activist efforts on each campus differ slightly, but one commonality is a three-part “life cycle” that can provide chapters guidance weathering the storm:

- ▶ **Phase 1: Posting** | Social accounts created with anonymous, unverified posts. Activists may also create anonymous petitions to abolish Greek life.
- ▶ **Phase 2: Pressure** | Chapters and members are presented with a binary choice to resign/cease operations or be on the wrong side of history.
- ▶ **Phase 3: Resolve** | After an initial wave of emotion and panic subsides, councils, chapters and administration come together to respond and develop action plans.

MY CHAPTER IS EXPERIENCING THIS RIGHT NOW. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- ▶ First, file an [incident report](#) to make the Administrative Office aware that these efforts are underway on your campus. A team of professionals will work with chapter leadership to discuss concerns, reaction within the chapter and fraternity community, talking points and response.
- ▶ Second, briefly [alert the chapter at large and your advisors](#) to the situation. Some of them may not have social accounts and may not be aware. Clarify that the chapter [president should be the chapter's sole spokesman](#) and that more information will be available once a response plan is in place.
- ▶ Third, [breathe](#). Every social media comment or anonymous petition signature will further create angst for chapter leaders and members, but don't let the pressure lead to tension within the brotherhood or a hurried public response. Temporarily turn off tagging/comments if it helps minimize stress.
- ▶ Fourth, the chapter president and/or IFC representative should [work with the council](#) on a response plan that is aligned with NIC standards.

HOW AND WHEN SHOULD OUR CHAPTER RESPOND?

On matters related to the greater fraternity community, encourage the local IFC to create a [single public statement](#) on behalf of all member organizations. If a chapter president needs further comment, a sample response is provided below. Chapters are encouraged to coordinate all final statements through the Administrative Office:

- ▶ “The core values of Beta Theta Pi align with those of [college/university], and we are committed to treating all members of the campus community with dignity and respect. The cultural challenges we're facing are campus-wide and will not be overcome by simply eliminating fraternities and sororities. All stakeholders should have a seat at the table and an opportunity to provide concrete solutions for ensuring Greek life is a place for personal development and healthy, lifelong relationships for all students.”



WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Before making a public response, we highly recommend [all statements be coordinated through the Administrative Office](#). General Fraternity dues help to provide your chapter access to timely, professional media counsel through Beta's communication department. In serious matters like these, don't go it alone. We're here to help — no matter the issue. Contact Director of Media Relations [Justin Warren](#) (214.909.4849) for assistance.

▶ MEDIA PROTOCOL

The Administrative Office is available to assist chapters with managing media requests in a responsible and timely way.

If a media inquiry is received, [don't panic](#). The following steps will help to navigate the media engagement process for the chapter president:

STEP 1: ACKNOWLEDGE THE REQUEST

Within minutes, acknowledge the reporter's request and thank them for their inquiry. Request time to gather your thoughts before making an official statement and determine the reporter's:

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Media outlet
- ▶ Contact information
- ▶ Deadline

Request to receive their questions in writing, if possible.

STEP 2: CONTACT THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Immediately contact Communication Department staffer [Justin Warren](#) (214.909.4849) with details of the inquiry. He will promptly work with you to craft an official statement or interview response.

STEP 3: PLAY BY THE RULES

The Fraternity has one goal in media engagement: ensuring the safety of our members and protecting the operation and reputation of the chapter.

To do this, spokesmen should abide by the following rules of engagement:

- ▶ Be quick. Be helpful. Be honest.
- ▶ Decline on-camera, telephone or live interviews, unless approved by the Administrative Office.
- ▶ Never answer a question with “no comment.” It's perfectly acceptable to say “I don't know” (if it's true).
- ▶ Do not draw conclusions, speculate, lay blame or admit liability.
- ▶ Avoid mentioning names.