

ACADEMIC SENATE

Resolution 15/16-001

Procedure:

1. A motion should be typed or hand-printed.
2. A motion should first be offered to the Executive Board for review and advice on editing and parliamentary implication.
3. If changes are necessary, the motion should be recopied on another form. Amendments may be indicated in the margin or on the reverse of this form.

Proposal on Change in Policy on Commencement of Greek Life Activities: Spring Rush

WHEREAS, The University of Southern California is a premier research institution that attracts top performing students seeking a rich educational experience. USC also has a long tradition of Greek life, and participation in such organizations provides a valuable source of affiliation, socialization, and leadership development, as well as opportunities for community service and philanthropy. Many faculty and alumni have experienced the benefits of the Greek system, and

WHEREAS, Part of this USC tradition has been the recruitment of students into Greek organizations at the beginning of the first semester. Almost 45% of first-year students pledge a Greek organization: for USC men this involves seven weeks of new-member education on top of first-year coursework, and for USC women this means seven days of pledging prior to enrollment in their first USC class, and

WHEREAS, This first-semester recruitment process can have a detrimental impact on students' earliest experiences on campus. Students may experience a high level of stress as they go through the selection process, and can feel rejected when they are not selected. Rushing a fraternity during the first seven weeks of class takes time away from the development of effective habits (e.g. faculty report students missing class or coming to class exhausted), and students who participate in Rush on average have a lower GPA in their freshman year than those who do not, and

WHEREAS, New students need time to explore all that the university has to offer educationally, socially, and personally before they commit to any particular path, including Greek organizations. Each Greek organization has its own history, traditions, alumni networks, service focus, and requirements for membership, and students cannot initially know which organization is the best fit for them. Many new students are also unaware of other options available to them for social interaction and affiliation, and may be limiting their exposure to other outlets by committing too early to Greek organizations, and

WHEREAS, Deferring recruitment to Greek organizations until the spring semester would afford new students a greater opportunity to transition into the demands of college life and gain a better perspective on which organizations are the best fit for them, and

WHEREAS, Many of our peer institutions have moved the initiation of Greek organization activities (Rush) to the Spring semester in order to give students more time to get acclimated to university life, including the following AAU members: Boston University, Brown University, Case Western Reserve University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Duke University, Emory University, Harvard University, Indiana University, Johns Hopkins University, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Rutgers University, Stanford University, Stony Brook University SUNY, Tulane University, University of Buffalo SUNY, University of Chicago, University of Maryland College Park, University of Pennsylvania, University of Virginia, Vanderbilt University, and Yale University.

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54 Therefore, Be it RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate recommends that pledging a Greek
55 organization be postponed, for freshmen until the Spring Term of their first year, and for transfer
56 students until they have a USC GPA.

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59 Resolution Number: 15/16-01

Motion by: Executive Board

60 Date: September 23, 2015

(No second required when moved by committee)

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62 To be presented at the Senate meeting on September 30, 2015

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64 Action taken: Passed Unanimously

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