



# FORWARD TO 50:

Elevating AFA into its Next 50 Years  
**2022 - 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN**



The **Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA)** is the leading voice in creating a fraternity/sorority profession of ever increasing skill, value, and inclusion. We achieve our commitments through the strategic and equity-minded advancement of our pillars — developing professional competency, advancing research, advocating for the profession, and creating community.

#### **AFA MISSION:**

The mission of AFA is to elevate the standard for effective professional practice in working with sororities and fraternities in higher education.

#### **AFA VISION:**

AFA is the premier community of professional practice for those committed to enhancing the fraternity/sorority experience, and is the leading voice in creating a fraternity/sorority profession of ever increasing skill, value, and inclusion.

#### **AFA PILLARS:**

AFA's mission and vision are achieved through the strategic and equity-minded advancement of the following pillars:

- **Developing Professional Competency:** AFA develops a portfolio of programs and experiences designed to enhance and maximize the skills, talents, and overall effectiveness of the fraternity/sorority professional.
- **Advancing Research:** AFA drives the empirical study of both the fraternity/sorority profession and the fraternity/sorority experience that better defines evidence-based research and professional practice.
- **Advocating for the Profession:** AFA strengthens the narrative around the critical and essential role of the fraternity/sorority profession and its role in facilitating healthy fraternity/sorority experiences.
- **Creating Community:** AFA builds and cultivates meaningful, professional communities that allow our members to more effectively engage with people and ideas in an inclusive and supportive environment.



**Dear AFA Friends and Supporters,**

In 1976, as a product of a prior meeting commemorating the bi-centennial of the fraternity/sorority movement, AFA was born. The primary purpose of our founding was to foster collaboration amongst the multiple populations of professionals and volunteers who were committed to elevating the work of the fraternity/sorority advisor. That spirit of cooperation and collaboration is still at the heart of AFA, and has served as the foundation for our continued growth.

As we fast forward almost 50 years later, AFA serves as the leading association for those professionals and volunteers committed to 'elevating the standard' for professional practice in our work with sororities and fraternities. As the fraternity/sorority experience has expanded and diversified, so has our work. As important as that work is, it has also become increasingly more complex, and is in increasing need of an association focused on building a more skillful, more valued, and more inclusive profession. 'Forward to 50: Elevating AFA into its next 50 years' is our public roadmap that gets us closer to achieving that vision.

In September 2021, as a result of our Strategy Recalibration Project, our Association announced a strengthened mission, vision, and pillars. Our 2022-2026 strategic plan, 'Forward to 50', further leans into that strategy recalibration by more clearly outlining the 'stretch goals' designed to advance each of our pillars: developing professional competency, advancing research, advocating for the profession, and creating community. These goals were developed with the explicit purpose of strengthening the professional talent that will shape the future of our profession.

Throughout this recalibration and planning process, our members have provided perspective that has driven both our strategy recalibration through to the creation of this plan. From providing reactions to draft mission and vision statements, to participating in SWOT analyses, to sharing their perspectives on draft stretch goals at our Annual Meeting - our members' time and talents continue to be our greatest resource. We look forward to the ways in which our members will continue to guide and strengthen our resolve in accomplishing these stretch goals.

AFA will celebrate a milestone birthday in 2026. While we are excited about the work that leads up to this milestone, this plan is not just about AFA turning 50. This plan is about setting up our association to continue to lead into its next 50 years so that students and alumni can be transformed through higher education and the sorority/fraternity experience.

We look forward to working together to advance AFA and our shared profession!

**Special Thanks** to those members who provided support/assistance/feedback to AFA's strategic planning work:

- Mustafa 'MJ' Abdullah, Jr.
- Ronald Atkinson
- Kevin Bazner, Ph.D.
- Shelly Brown Dobek
- Stephen Dominy
- Guillermo Flores
- Phoebe Galbraith
- Becky Gleason
- J. Chris Hager
- Kahlin McKeown
- Destiny Savage
- Josh Schutts, Ph.D.
- Corry Smith
- Jacob Tidwell
- Josh Welch
- Joe Wheelless
- Gary Wiser, Ed.D.
- Dan Wrona

**Jason Begeron**  
AFA Executive Director



**Chris Graham**  
AFA President  
2021-2022



# PILLAR 1

## DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

*AFA develops a portfolio of programs and experiences designed to enhance and maximize the skills, talents, and overall effectiveness of the fraternity/sorority professional.*

**STRETCH GOAL 1: AFA will develop a robust professional development strategy that meets the needs of fraternity/sorority professionals, from graduate student/early-career professional to senior level administrator.** AFA will focus on expanding professional development to include the knowledge and professional skills needed to successfully elevate professional practice. AFA will further invest in core competency enhancement and integration designed to better assist professionals in crafting more intentional professional development planning. AFA will cement higher education partnerships that help to expand our professional development reach to new audiences.

**STRETCH GOAL 2: AFA will partner with external associations and organizations to provide shared professional development programming that collectively influences the fraternity/sorority experience.** AFA will identify and prioritize focused/boutique program opportunities created in partnership with external organizations that serve to build knowledge and codify best/promising practice, and will expand its MOUs with partner organizations/associations to provide partner content that meets the educational needs of constituents within and outside of AFA.

**STRETCH GOAL 3: AFA will develop 'Communities of Practice' designed to bring together professionals, organizations, and campuses around areas of practice impacting the fraternity/sorority experience.** AFA will engage its members, host institutions, headquarters, and vendors in building communities for fraternity/sorority professionals designed to share, discuss, and test ideas around specific areas of fraternity/sorority practice. Additionally, AFA will identify meaningful ways for those communities to shape best practice across the profession.

**STRETCH GOAL 4: AFA will strengthen its information technology in a way that will provide a more focused, personalized member and donor platform experience.** AFA will invest in platform upgrades to its member-facing information technology that better showcase a more integrated AFA member and donor experience and facilitate easier access to AFA programs and services.

**STRETCH GOAL 5: AFA will invest in certification and credentialing opportunities (aligned with our Core Competencies) across the fraternity/sorority profession, including for those identifying as campus-based, headquarters staff, and volunteers.** AFA will focus on providing certificate-style experiences that allow for members to showcase specific knowledge and skills that can elevate their work and provide upward mobility.

**STRETCH GOAL 6: AFA will integrate mentorship/sponsorship mechanisms within appropriate AFA professional development programs in order to meet our community's needs for membership/sponsorship/access.** AFA will build out mentor and sponsor integrations to our flagship programs (programs like Graduate Training Track, First 90 Days, Mid-Career Institute) that connect participants to other talent designed to strengthen connection to AFA and to provide further opportunity for knowledge application.



# PILLAR 2

## ADVANCING RESEARCH

*AFA drives the empirical study of both the fraternity/sorority profession and the fraternity/sorority experience that better defines evidence-based research and professional practice.*

**STRETCH GOAL 1: AFA will prioritize 'research-to-practice' through identifying, prioritizing, and funding research designed to most impact policy and practice within the fraternity/sorority profession.**

AFA commits to identifying core 'research to practice' questions (critical questions that have the greatest potential to drive best and promising practice), building communities of researchers around those questions, and driving funding towards those questions.

**STRETCH GOAL 2: Within those core 'research to practice' areas, AFA will increase the size and scope of research being commissioned and published that is focused on experiences historically underrepresented in larger fraternity/sorority narratives.**

This includes (but is not limited to) intentionally directing financial resources and attention towards the experiences of students and professionals of color, LGBTQ+ students and professionals, differently-abled students and professionals, and first-generation and first-in-family students and professionals.

**STRETCH GOAL 3: AFA will invest in community development and educational programming programming efforts designed to increase the amount of emerging and established researchers in fraternity/sorority life.** AFA will leverage affinity groups, year round programming, increased connections with higher education graduate preparation programs, and our Oracle Writers' Retreat to both build community and better prepare current and future scholars and scholar-practitioners to contribute meaningful research, instruction, and scholarship to the industry.

# PILLAR 3

## ADVOCATING FOR THE PROFESSION

*AFA strengthens the narrative around the critical and essential role of the fraternity/sorority profession and its role in facilitating healthy fraternity/sorority experiences.*

**STRETCH GOAL 1: AFA will strengthen its role in policy education for the fraternity/sorority profession, focusing on understanding and navigating federal and state policy/legislative efforts.**

In recognition of the increasing role of state and federal policy in the fraternity/sorority profession, AFA will engage our volunteers and industry content experts to provide regular updates regarding state, federal, and other legal updates in ways that help to best prepare practitioners to navigate increasing legal and governmental influence.

**STRETCH GOAL 2: AFA will strengthen its industry data collection and benchmarking through the development of a self-service data clearinghouse that tracks benchmarking data at an institutional/organizational level.**

AFA recognizes the role that democratizing data plays in informing hiring and compensation, staffing practices, and general advocacy efforts around common and best practice. AFA will strengthen its institutional survey initiative to further self-service access to data that will drive data-informed decision making at both the campus and fraternal organization level.

**STRETCH GOAL 3: AFA will build stronger systems alignment within our data infrastructure to support a larger empirical narrative connecting factors that lead to persistence, competency, compensation, and upward mobility in the fraternity/sorority profession.**

Through stronger alignment between AFA member and volunteer data, program participation data, and core competency data (among other data), AFA will use that data to better understand the experiences, environments, and connections that best allow professionals to persist, be upwardly mobile, and strengthen their skills and talents.

**STRETCH GOAL 4: AFA will strengthen its public voice within the broader higher education and fraternity/sorority industries through a more robust use of public positions, policy papers, and research briefs.**

AFA will leverage its community of volunteers, scholars, and industry leaders to strengthen and expand upon our current position statements. Additionally, AFA will deliver other position pieces designed to address issues of practice in ways that publicly inform best and promising practice development. This includes opportunities for partner position statements with other associations, increasing our relationships with media outlets, and work with university and fraternity/sorority general council operations to inform policy development at the highest level.



# PILLAR 4

## CREATING COMMUNITY

*AFA builds and cultivates meaningful, professional communities that allow our members to more effectively engage with people and ideas in an inclusive and supportive environment.*

**STRETCH GOAL 1: AFA will build out a comprehensive affinity/identity space structure that supports communities amongst salient identities and professional roles.** AFA will leverage our community of volunteers to assist in the development of a structure that supports the development of new affinity spaces. Additionally, AFA will determine the right mechanism of support and connection to already established affinity spaces that further drive connection to and support from AFA.

**STRETCH GOAL 2: AFA will develop a members-only online community that serves to advance the aims of the profession and holds space for diverse perspectives.** AFA will engage our volunteer community in the exploration, testing, and identification of an effective virtual community platform, and will build out a moderation strategy that supports connection and community designed to strengthen our professional community. This includes creation of virtual sub-communities that hold space based upon important affinity groups, geographic locations, and work interests.

**STRETCH GOAL 3: AFA will be a convener and problem-solver in building relationships between campuses and headquarters staffs/volunteers/organizations who are actively prioritizing student success.** AFA will strengthen our key relationships with fraternities/sororities, umbrella organizations, partner associations and campuses, actively demonstrating a commitment to student success in fraternities and sororities, and convene those groups with a focus on partnership and problem-solving.