

Name: Dr. Kate Butler
Gender Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
Position/Title: Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life
Organization/Institution/Employer: University of Cincinnati

Please concisely outline your professional volunteer experience (most recent position first) and any other volunteer experience, both within and outside of the association, that is directly related to association management, board service, or the position for which you are accepting a nomination. Be sure to include both the position held and dates of service.

Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors-Educational Programs Committee(2020), Nominations and Elections Committee (2018, 2019, 2021, 2022), Professional Development Committee (current) Chi Omega Fraternity National Risk Management Committee (current) Hazing Prevention Taskforce-University of Cincinnati (Chair) (current) Divisional Conference Planning Team-University of Cincinnati (Chair) (2022-2023) Co-curricular Engagement and Programming Community of Practice-The Ohio State University-Chair (2019-2021) Health and Wellness Community of Practice-The Ohio State University (2019-2021) Chi Omega State of Ohio Alumnae Association (Secretary) (2016)

The fraternity and sorority profession (and higher education in general) is a complex, interdisciplinary space with many key stakeholders. What do you see as the greatest opportunities to build stakeholder alignment and consensus over the next five years? How would you effectively lead the association through this exercise in alignment?

I believe that the AFA Strategic Plan provides us a strong foundation on which we can engage stakeholders. The pillars can be used by board members, AFA staff, and volunteers as they connect with various stakeholders to identify areas of alignment and potential collaboration with external stakeholders, such as Advancing Research in conjunction with other professional associations. The pillars will also help us to identify areas where AFA may be uniquely positioned and will need to better focus on internal stakeholders, such as creating community in partnership with umbrella organizations. My experience serving in various AFA volunteer roles, committees for several national organizations, and communities of practice within institutions has required me to understand the unique needs of multiple constituents and identify priorities and systems that address these varied needs. I would be able to use this ability to connect with and learn from others in order to lead the Association in the collaborative execution of the strategic plan.

Describe your understanding of the role of the board of directors (BOD). What strengths or characteristics do you possess that would make you an effective BOD member? How, specifically, have you demonstrated this?

The Board of Directors serves as the strategic leader of the Association. In this role, the board must work to understand the needs of a diverse membership, consider financial limitations, and envision a path forward. The work of previous BoDs has established the Forward to 50 Strategic Plan which outlines the priorities of the Association. Current and future boards will need to steward these priorities with particular consideration for changing contexts and serve as guideposts for AFA staff and volunteers who ultimately execute specific initiatives. In my role as a Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, I establish goals and priorities by understanding the experiences of our students, identifying areas of alignment with institutional priorities, and managing the resources available to our team. I then must communicate these priorities to various campus and community partners to increase engagement and work with staff who

directly implement initiatives. This leadership requires strong communication, long-term thinking, and the ability to balance needs and resources.

Describe any salient identities you hold, both professionally and personally, and how they may frame your perspective as a member of the board of directors.

Within the Association, I hold many identities that privilege my voice and experience. I am a white, cis woman, a member of a large Panhellenic organization, and have attended or worked at several Power 5 institutions. My entry into the field was also facilitated by mentors and supervisors who are well-connected and streamlined my ability to get involved and feel connected in AFA. Knowing that my identities and support systems have facilitated my ability to connect within the Association drives me to help to create additional pathways for new professionals and identify opportunities for space and voice for those who have been previously left out of the community of AFA. As a member of the board of directors, I would continue to work to connect with and understand the experiences of those from different backgrounds, to advocate for creating more opportunities for involvement, and to elevate voices that may be drowned out.

AFA at its core is a professional development association, and has continued to invest in and enhance our professional core competencies. How can AFA best facilitate the development of necessary knowledge and skills for those doing the work of the fraternity/sorority profession, and how do you see that work needing to evolve?

I believe that the Core Competencies framework and self-assessment serve as a strong foundation for professional development. As a current member of the Professional Development committee, we are in the process of developing additional resources to help map educational resources to the framework, enabling members to more easily access opportunities that are relevant to their intended developmental outcomes. This work can also be expanded to professional development opportunities offered outside of the Association to supplement the current offerings. I believe that this mapping will also enable the BoD, volunteers and AFA staff to better assess what areas of professional development need additional focus and resourcing. By better assessing our current offerings, we will also be able to identify areas that may be over-resourced, allowing the Association to better allocate resources to those areas of need.

One of the main responsibilities of board members is to maintain financial accountability of the organization. Board members act as trustees of the organization's assets and must exercise due diligence to oversee that the organization is well-managed and that its financial situation remains sound. Please describe a time when you have had to make difficult financial and/or resource allocation decisions and how would you use that experience as you serve on the board.

When I started my first professional role in higher education, I was told that the functional area I oversaw had been operating significantly over budget for each of the past 4 years. I was told that my first measure of success would be to operate those programs at the same level of experience without going over budget. To fulfill this expectation, I reviewed previous budget expenditures to identify areas of significant cost, identified areas of overlap between programs that could be scaled to reduce cost, reviewed assessment results to identify non-impactful elements that could be reduced or eliminated, and created detailed planning timelines that reduced costs of rushed items. Additionally, I met with my supervisor and other invested stakeholders to discuss my proposed changes in an effort to avoid changes that would create a negative impact. This experience taught me to look holistically at expenditures and program offerings in order to increase efficiencies within operations. Within board service, I would work to understand individual elements of the budget, as well as, how each contributes to the greater goals of the Association in order to recommend changes or reallocation.