

Name: Shanté Hearst  
Gender Pronouns: She/Her/Hers  
Position/Title: Director, Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life  
Organization/Institution/Employer: Texas A&M University

**Please concisely outline your professional volunteer experience (most recent position first) and any other volunteer experience, both within and outside of the association, that could speak to your qualification to serving on the Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC).**

DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. Brazos Valley Area Alumnae • Chair, Nominating Committee: July 2022 – present • Member, Internal Audit Committee: July 2022 – present

**What do you believe are characteristics and qualifications potential members of the board of directors should possess?**

I believe that potential members of the board of directors should embody integrity, respect, strategic thinking, and the ability to consider multiple perspectives through critical thinking. It is important that board members display a commitment to the profession and the students that we serve. This includes advocating for the needs of both campus and HQ professionals equally. For me personally, I desire leadership that values diversity, equity, and inclusion which is displayed in their daily practice and decision making.

**From your perspective, what/where are the communities of untapped potential within AFA? How would you recommend the Nominations and Elections Committee tap into those areas of untapped potential?**

I believe that young/newer and BIPOC professionals communities have untapped potential within the Association. To reach them, I recommend that the NEC build stronger partnerships with the Regional Directors to share communications and identify potential candidates/nominees. Understanding that AFA is also making more efforts to support affinity groups, it will be important to also engage those spaces to encourage involvement on the Board and with the NEC.

**An important component of Board of Directors and NEC recruiting is ensuring diverse identities are represented. As a member of the NEC, how will you advance goals of ensuring diversity of perspective on the Board of Directors and the NEC ? What salient identities do you hold that may frame your perspective in Board and NEC candidate recruitment and selection?**

My response to this question is informed by my experiences as a Black woman with Black feminist sensibilities, who is a higher education professional with 13 years of experience in fraternity and sorority life (FSL) at various historically white institutions (HWI) in three geographical regions in the U.S. I was attracted to this profession through my own experience joining and leading a historically Black sorority 16 years ago. Combined, my personal and professional experiences have positioned me to understand and interrogate the complexities of fraternity and sorority membership; to understand how fraternal organizations shape the lives of their members and the campus community at large. This includes bearing witness to the ways that white heteronormative cis-patriarchy (WHC-P) perpetuates the subordination of marginalized groups. As such, I believe that it is important to seek representatives who hold marginalized identities. As previously mentioned, this requires the NEC and others in Association leadership support members in the affinity spaces. We should encourage members to use their voices to advocate and

implement the changes they would like reflected in the policies and practices of the Association. This starts with myself. While I am initially an observer in a new space, I have grown very comfortable speaking up for what I believe is just and serves those who are often overlooked or not considered. I would continue to advocate like this as a member of the NEC.

**What role do you often play in group decision-making? How do you typically work with groups to ensure all perspectives, including those that may dissent from the majority, are heard?**

In most group dynamics I often serve as one who keeps the group organized, informed, and on task. This includes making sure that all perspectives have been heard and considered to build consensus on the decisions we're making. This also includes making sure that the decision that we're making stays true to the task at hand and is aligned with the mission, values, and purpose of the group/organization. In managing those who dissent from the majority, I strive to provide space to listen and learn what their concerns are, what their desired outcome(s) are, and what they need to rejoin the group in order to come to a collective consensus. With this, I typically serve as the interpreter to help everyone hear and understand each other so we can continue the conversation to make a decision that best serves those we're serving.