

ELEVATE THE STANDARD:

THE CAMPAIGN FOR AFA'S FUTURE

Powering the human capital that elevates sorority and fraternity experiences.

The success of the sorority and fraternity movement deeply depends on the human capital of the sorority and fraternity profession - those individuals powering the learning experiences needed to elevate sororities and fraternities. However, the work of sorority and fraternity professionals is becoming increasingly more complex in the face of governmental regulation, threats to mental and emotional health, and declining college enrollments. As professional development resources struggle to keep up with those demands, emerging and established talent continues to leave our industry. 'Elevate the Standard' ensures that the human capital powering the sorority and fraternity profession not only persists, but expands.



The Need

On average, the sorority & fraternity profession experiences an annualized turnover rate of 25-33%. Access to meaningful professional association experiences has shown to increase likelihood of retention of sorority & fraternity professionals (Janosik, Carpenter, & Creamer, 2006; Williams, 2020). The Association and Foundation recognize that the strategic work required of the sorority & fraternity professional is multi-year commitment, and retention of professionals is critical to the success of our industry.

Professional development resources for our professional community are not keeping up with the skill-demands of sorority & fraternity professionals. In 2022, over 50% of sorority & fraternity professionals reported that their annual professional development allocation failed to fully cover the cost to attend our flagship professional development and community-building experience, or Annual Meeting (AFA Member Registration Data, 2022). As the complexity demands of our profession increase, access to professional development resources must match those demands.

Diminishing human capital pipelines into our profession means challenges in uncovering and developing better trained and supported sorority and fraternity professionals. Since 2020, higher education professionals across our professional landscape are finding themselves at a crossroads in their ability to succeed in this work and to find themselves central to the work of our profession. Graduate pipelines into our profession are decreasing (Council of Graduate Schools, 2021), and a strengthening of interdisciplinary graduate education, while also opening up more innovative pathways for professional preparation, is critical for a stronger sorority & fraternity profession.

Students need us to be at our best. Sorority & fraternity professionals across all environments are on the front-lines; it is the student-facing nature of our work, at all levels. This means that they are working in cooperation with students to strengthen their resolve in the face of increasing issues of mental and physical health and well being, increasing debt, and success in the face of oppression. Better equipped professionals are substantially more likely to impact students in the ways they both need and deserve.



Association of
Fraternity/Sorority
Advisors

AFA1976.ORG

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Why AFA?

AFA is uniquely positioned to address the needs of sorority and fraternity professionals across the industry, more than any other organization. AFA centers the shared and interdisciplinary nature of sorority & fraternity professionals regardless of where and how they engage in that work. The work of a stronger sorority & fraternity profession is labor that is central to AFA's mission.

AFA is laser-focused on the work of the professional community.

AFA has always believed that, through our work in elevating sorority & fraternity professionals, that sorority & fraternity communities benefit as a direct result. Additionally, our ability to see alignment in our work as sorority & fraternity professionals in all contexts is a critical element of a more skilled, inclusive, and valued profession.



Our Priorities

ELEVATING TALENT

ELEVATING RESEARCH

ELEVATING INNOVATION

ELEVATING EQUITY & INCLUSION

Our Priorities

ELEVATING TALENT

AFA prioritizes the building and retaining of top talent as critical to our industry's success. AFA must create a portfolio of educational and professional development programs and experiences designed to enhance and maximize the skills, talents, and overall effectiveness of the sorority & fraternity professional. AFA must be able to support cutting edge professional development that allows AFA to both build and keep talent within our industry.

Opportunities for campaign support include:

- Enhancing AFA's capacity to deliver targeted professional development programming to early career, mid career, and senior career professionals designed to create and retain talent in our industry;
- Investing in our delivery infrastructure for professional development programming including new virtual platforms and learning management systems that build skills in the moments they are most needed;
- Increasing access to AFA's professional development programs through scholarship relief;
- Investing in certification and credentialing opportunities across the fraternity/sorority profession designed to allow professionals to build and demonstrate skills for continued advancement and upward mobility;
- Strengthen our professional development programming in ways that help professionals to understand and navigate the increasingly complex state and federal policy changes;
- Growing AFA's local and regional impact through professional development occurring at a local, state, and regional level.

Our Desired Impact:

- That meaningful, impactful professional development is available and accessible to all those working with fraternities and sororities, regardless of role, professional level, or level of access to resources.
- That sorority/fraternity professionals become more likely to persist in the profession and utilize that increased experience and expertise to continue to serve student populations.
- That learning technology serves not as a barrier, but as a facilitator of seamless professional development.

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ELEVATING RESEARCH

AFA prioritizes the research-to-practice investments necessary to translate cutting edge research into everyday professional practice. AFA must strengthen the empirical study of both the sorority & fraternity and the sorority/fraternity experience that better defines evidence-based research and professional practice.

Opportunities for campaign support include:

- Enhancing AFA's capacity to commission translational research intended to strengthen the profession;
- Opportunities to fund competitive grants programs designed to provide access to the resources necessary to answer the profession's most challenging questions;
- To invest and commission research that centers the experiences of underrepresented and underserved populations in the historical context of the sorority/fraternity experience;
- To conceptualize research into practical models designed to facilitate stronger, more focused professional practice;
- To build a data clearinghouse that collects and disseminates data designed to yield stronger institutional support for the talent needed to effectively serve and strengthen sorority/fraternity communities.

Our Desired Impact:

- That decisions of practice in the sorority/fraternity industry are overwhelmingly informed by research and relevant literature;
- That the literature on implementation and effectiveness of policies in the sorority and fraternity industry becomes increasingly clear, leading to the removal of policies determined to create disparate impacts on student success.
- That the experiences of underrepresented sorority/fraternity experiences are widely understood and supported across the profession.

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ELEVATING INNOVATION

AFA believes that our best ideas are ahead of us, not behind us. AFA prioritizes investments in new ideas, structures, processes, and ways of knowing that transform the ways in which we think about fraternities and sororities.

Opportunities for campaign support include:

- Investing in “Communities of Practice” designed to build enclaves of expertise, to test ideas, and to develop best and promising practices (i.e. prevention, assessment and evaluation, conduct and accountability);
- Creating and funding of ‘Innovation Grants’ designed to fund creative approaches to solving problems plaguing the fraternity/sorority experience;
- Support for funding designed to pull in and engage minds external to higher education and sorority/fraternity life;

Our Desired Impact:

- That the opportunities for innovation are not diminished by a scarcity of resources.
- That the elevation and celebration of ‘controlled experimentation’ becomes a core expectation of our professional community.
- That building and leveraging communities of expertise within our industry better serves colleges and universities, fraternities and sororities, and students at large.

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AFA believes a stronger profession is both more diverse and more equitable - a professional space where all have the opportunity to strengthen their skills and contribute excellent work to our profession. AFA prioritizes the building and cultivating of meaningful, professional communities that allow sorority & fraternity to more effectively engage with people and ideas in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Opportunities for campaign support include:

- Creating scholarship funds dollars that work to eliminate cost barriers to participation in AFA programs;
- Creating opportunities to fund and support the creation and continued work of affinity spaces that help professionals engage and find belonging in the profession;
- Investing in professional development experiences focused on building skills that advance stronger understandings of equity, diversity, and inclusion and the spectrum of our fraternity;
- Creating virtual and online communities that connect professionals across the country to advance the aims of the profession and hold space for diversity and diverse perspectives;
- Strengthening our service to sorority/fraternity professional and sorority/fraternity communities nested at historically Black colleges and universities and other minority serving institutions.

Our Desired Impact:

- To expand who is included, supported, and valued in the work of the sorority/fraternity profession.
- To produce increasingly more prepared professionals who are positioned to serve increasingly diverse student populations.
- To allow all those who are interested in and capable of doing the work of the sorority/fraternity profession to find a community of professionals committed to their inclusion and their long-term success.

Campaign Timeline

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Phase 1 – Pre-Campaign and Feasibility

January 2022 – December 2022

- Develop campaign goals and objectives
- Engage campaign counsel
- Develop draft case for support

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Phase 2 – Campaign Planning

January 2023 – December 2023

- Conduct Foundation and Association board campaigns
- Identify and engage campaign steering committee
- Test and finalize case for support
- Identify and solicit pace-setting gifts
- Revise and solidify campaign goals

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Phase 3 - 'Elevate the Standard' Quiet Phase

January 2024 – December 2024

- Form and task 'Elevate the Standard' campaign steering committee
- Solicit leadership gifts

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Phase 4 - 'Elevate the Standard' Public Phase – 60% of gifts raised

January 2025 – December 2026

- Kick-off and celebration at the 2024 Annual Meeting
- Announcement of campaign goals
- Provide opportunities for AFA base to contribute
- Cultivate additional endowment opportunities for AFA base to craft and support

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Phase 5 – Campaign Celebration and Stewardship

December 2026 – Ongoing

- Acknowledge gifts and bring gift commitments to closure
- Celebrate the impact of our donors on the Association
- Increase ways to strengthen opportunities for our donors to continue to contribute and grow their commitment to the AFA Foundation

CAMPAIGN GOAL IS REACHED!

About AFA

Since 1976, AFA has 'elevated the standard' by building a stronger, more effective and more impactful sorority and fraternity profession. This work includes assisting over 10,000 individual members who provide service to millions of sorority & fraternity members, both undergraduates and alumni. AFA's strategic pillars are laser-focused on how AFA 'elevates the standard':

- **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.

About the AFA Foundation

Since 1992, the AFA Foundation has worked to support the mission and educational objectives of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors by providing opportunities for members and friends to show their commitment to the success of our profession through charitable giving, while providing critical financial support that advances the educational mission of AFA.

The AFA Foundation administers educational program endowments and individual scholarship funds in support of the mission of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, individual AFA members, and our wider fraternal communities. By strengthening educational opportunities and access, the AFA Foundation works to help professionals acquire the foundational knowledge that is essential to serving as a fraternity/sorority professional.