



# WILL FRANKENBERGER

Chief Learning Officer | Delta Zeta Sorority  
*Candidate, AFA Board of Directors*

**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?**

Regardless of role we fill in the fraternal space, we need innovative thinking and strategic partnerships as we navigate membership declines and navigate public policy matters. As a HQ professional, I would serve as a voice advocating for HQ professionals while understanding the demands of our campus based professionals to align stakeholders. As a skilled communicator and a leader in the Association, I can use my communication skills and connections to achieve vulnerable trust and authentic communication addressing AFA's strategic plan Pillar 4, Creating Community; Stretch Goal 3, AFA will be a convener and problem- solver in building relationships between campuses and headquarters who are prioritizing student success. Futuristically thinking, AFA should consider strategic ways to prioritize other higher education associations partnerships and shared services funding models such as annual conferences or educational resource development. This aligns with AFA's strategic plan under Pillar 3, Advocating for the Profession Stretch Goal 4, strengthening the public voice of AFA within the broader higher education and fraternal industries. Finding ways to bring strategic partnerships together like FEA, ASCA, and AFA will continue to build on the work of connection we strive to make as a field but also intentionally achieve our mission of development of skills and knowledge in our interdisciplinary community.

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**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 AFA Board serves as a governing board which means they focus on advancing the strategic plan of AFA and hold fiduciary responsibility and resource allocation determinations of the Association. Other BOD models would require a working board where there is a blend of oversight and lower level execution of tasks but the current AFA BOD is not functioning in that model. As someone who supports a governing board in my professional job, I understand the nature of separating out the work from the governance. I know how to ask questions that align with larger strategic planning and long term achievement of the plan while considering the financial impact and priority of where money is to be spent. This is one place where I think being a headquarters professional does provide me with advanced governance knowledge in Board operations. In the current operating model for AFA, I understand my role would be to empower the staff the execute on the strategic plan with oversight and consideration from the Board without being the worker carrying out the task. To understand the achievements of the strategic plan, I would rely on data and the voice of the members to drive for those successes. Further, as a Board member I would rely on data to drive decisions. As a current Board member if I do not have the data to shape my thinking and voice, then I ask for more information. Data centers me and allows my biases to be checked and make decisions for the greater whole.

**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.**

My primary identity is as a queer human. When decisions are made within the Association, I focus on norms and language to ensure that queer members feel welcome and safe in our Association. Professionally, my identity as a headquarters professional would be a strong asset to the Board as there is a current paucity of professionals in the HQ space serving. As a headquarters professional, I see another side of our fraternal movement and aim to work in concert with our campus based professionals but see the challenges we both uniquely face. At a time where there is great strain on the relationship between campus and HQs - having both voices at the governing table of our professional association is critical. I also have a unique role in my professional space, as I am a cis man sitting at the table and making decisions for an organization, I am not a member of nor in the same lived experience as those members who have the privilege of its membership, which shapes my perspectives differently than others but also how I chose to use my voice to listen and when to lead. At my core I aim to be a self-aware individual of how power and privilege show up in a Board space where decisions are being made for our entire Association while honoring that not all of our members feel represented in the space, so making space for those ideas and asking questions to bring those voices into the room is a crucial aspect that a Board member must possess and I feel strongly positioned to do so.

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**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?**

AFA should remain diligent on following the Forward to 50 strategic plan outlining two pillars dedicated to professional development including Pillar 1, Developing Professional Competency and Pillar 3, Advocating for the Profession. Enhancing these competencies is achieved through investments in technology and partnerships to generate credentialed skills. Technology is a rapidly developing landscape that has large evidence-based data on its effectiveness for professional learning and upskilling. Flexibility for members to learn at their own pace and on their own schedule makes professional development more accessible. Incorporating gamification elements into training programs can enhance engagement and motivation. In the future, we will see the use of AR/VR technology for simulation learning that would help apply practical situations against theoretical knowledge. Additionally, AFA should consider expanding its professional development centering around certification programs to ensure that members can formally demonstrate their expertise in key areas. By partnering with universities and other professional organizations, AFA can create accredited programs offering continuing education credits and further enhance the professional credentials of its members. This allows revenue generation and cost sharing to increase access and enables customized learning pathways addressing needs of the individual and demonstrating a unique membership benefit.

**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.**

As a current Board President for a small performing arts non-profit we are always challenged by this balance of financial management and responsibility against the needs and wants of our members. As the President of the Board I often sit in the center of these discussions mediating the pros and cons from all parties and work towards a resolution for ultimate financial security but not without a plan or option for those things we are unable to do to be revisited. For example, when we set our non-profit's budget and allocation meeting, I find the best way to start the conversation is acknowledging that the decisions we make should be in the best interest of the Circuit in totality. Additionally, financial allocation and resource development decisions should always be aligned with the Association's mission and supportive of the strategic plan. Determinations of where to spend money or eliminate money, are grounded by the connection to our mission and strategic plan. Next, in these decisions, I rely heavily on facts and data to inform my decision. In every conversation I have participated in around allocation of resource, I have always made my decision based on data rather than feeling. Lastly, financial decisions then must be communicated clearly and include the rationale for why the decision was made. The goal is that the audience understands how and why the decision was made for financial transparency.

2025 AFA Leadership Elections

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**AFA's strategic plan, 'Forward to 50', will be the 'north star' for the Association's efforts over the 2025 and 2026 years. Discuss how you typically approach prioritization and allocation of strategic planning efforts, and what you see as the Board of Directors' role in strategic plan execution.**

To effectively approach prioritization, I would start by understanding the organization's mission, vision, and long-term goals. This foundational comprehension is critical for setting priorities that align with the overall direction of the organization. Data-driven analysis and informed decisions are essential in prioritization. Analysis data would encompass reviewing financial performance metrics, market conditions, membership retention and experiences, and an evaluation of internal capabilities and resources. I see the Board of Directors' role as providing strategic oversight, support, and accountability to ensure the successful execution of the plan. The BOD should review performance metrics and hold leaders accountable for achieving the established goals and alignment with the organization's mission. While a governing BOD should not be involved in day-to-day operations, it can offer invaluable support and guidance through leveraging the expertise, networks, and resources of BOD to help overcome challenges and seize opportunities. For example, if a particular initiative is not yielding the expected results, the board can collaboratively analyze the reasons and adjust the strategy accordingly with stakeholder feedback and collaboration. Additionally, keeping the membership aware of goals met and challenges provide a trusting relationship as the membership to ensure the BOD is held accountable for achieving the strategic plan set in place.