



KARI MURPHY

(she/her)

Director of Sorority & Fraternity Life
University of Kansas

Candidate, AFA Board of Directors

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.

Order of Omega Regional Chapter Director Western Region, September 2025-present; Kappa Delta Sorority National Leadership Team, Chapter Advisory Board Specialist, June 2021 - March 2026; AFA Advance U Committee Chair, 2025-present; AFA, Volunteer Coordinator 2024; AFA Annual Meeting Planning Team, Grad Staff Coordinator, January 2021-2023; Sigma Phi Epsilon, Indiana Gamma Balance Man Steward November 2019-May 2023; Alcohol Skills Training Program Facilitator, July 2017-August 2023; AFLV Order of Omega Case Study Judge 2021, 2023-2026; AFA AMPT Fundraising Committee, 2022; AFA Association Leadership Work Group, 2019; AFA Workgroup to Review Fireside Chats, 2019; Kappa Delta Chapter Advisory Board, Theta Nu Chapter Chair, 2015- 2019, Theta Delta Chapter, 2013-2015, Omicron Chapter 2011-2013, Eta Beta Chapter 2011-2013, Zeta Epsilon Chapter 2008-2011; AFLV Awards & Assessment Judge 2011-2015, 2018 & 2019.

Describe your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the AFA 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?

My experiences across campus-based and headquarters staff leadership, volunteer governance, and mentoring emerging professionals has given me the ability to understand how Board decisions affect members at multiple levels of the profession. The Board provides leadership and oversight to the Association finances, current and future needs of members, creating work groups or committees to look deeper at needs, trends or opportunities to enhance the Association's educational offers, partnerships, and to elevate our work. I believe the Board should be leaders in how they engage within and support the Association. Board members are role models for many so how they interact, support and present themselves within AFA is often an unspoken role. I demonstrate this through work with professional staff/graduate assistants. I've prided myself on helping others to learn, grow and advance. Through these opportunities I have gained many friendships and personal connections. I have also gained new perspective and ideas. The BoD is entrusted with making decisions

for the Association. I would contribute thoughtfulness, the ability to consider various impacts and understand how each decision strategically will enhance the Association. This role also brings the responsibility to be transparent, a strength I would contribute. I believe in sharing what we can with the membership to build trust in leadership and direction for the Association. As a supervisor/advisor I am transparent, when possible.

The fraternity and sorority profession (and higher education in general) is a complex, interdisciplinary space with many key stakeholders. Who do you see as some of the Association's primary stakeholders? What do you see as the greatest opportunities to build stakeholder alignment, consensus, and partnership? How would you effectively lead the association through this exercise in alignment?

The stakeholders for the Association include a wide range of people in my mind. The obvious stakeholders being the members, regardless of membership type or where they work. However, I think there are varieties of stakeholders within the membership too. This may include headquarters staff who have a different outcome or needs than campus-based professionals. It includes inter/national organization CEOs/Executives Directors and Senior Student Affairs Officers to enhance the Associations work on a grander scale. These stakeholders allow AFA to bring together the landscape of higher education and the landscape of inter/national organizations to find commonalities and gap areas which will need our focus. Tangentially, I believe student's parents, families, local advisors are all stakeholders as AFA seeks to elevate the standard. The work that is done by those elevating the stand is impacting students, parents, families and local advisors. As such, we must consider them stakeholders and understand their needs and perspectives, which will look different depending on their geographic location and the type of institution they support. To gain stakeholder alignment, they must first see themselves in the outcomes. We must make decisions that are inclusive, thoroughly researched/considered and transparently communicated. To do so we must include voices of varying perspective, scope of work and access to resources. In the past, I have been privileged to be part of micro-volunteer opportunities to serve on a few working groups. Groups that really wrestle with an event, program, idea, then present suggestions for a path forward. I have not seen these to be as prominent in recent years, but could be one way to gain and help educate on the process.

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 an Association we have continued to be transparent with our spending and financial decisions. Transparency builds trust for the Board of Directors and within the Association. I believe this is the backbone of financial responsibility. However, the reality is that inflation is rising and we must be able to serve the members and continue to elevate the profession and that could mean costs must rise. Return on investment is important for the members as well as the Association. One role I believe we play is supporting members to advocate for their professional development even when costs increase. Articulating the return on investment for members is a priority. In most of my professional roles I have managed a budget. In prior budget reduction exercises, I prioritized preserving staffing and student-facing initiatives by identifying reductions in discretionary spending and phased purchasing. However, the experience that stand out to me most is when I've been asked to consider where a 1, 3 & 5 percent reduction in our budget would come from. When presented with this challenge, my thought is always what is the path of least impact. I've also grown to understand that reductions may be requested in a variety of ways, contract reductions vs cash, temporary vs permanent. I focus on the livelihood of staff and determine where I can make other reductions so as to not impact staffing structure. I would bring this same strategy to the BoD for all financial considerations and decisions.

AFA's strategic plan, 'Forward to 50', will be coming to a close in 2026, and the AFA Board of Directors will be called to think about AFA's future strategic direction. Looking forward into the next five years, in what ways you see AFA being uniquely called to serve our profession? 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 development.

AFA must position itself as the central convener and thought leader for navigating complexity in fraternity/sorority life. For the creation of the next strategic plan, I see the Board of Directors being visionaries, collaborators and reviewers. The BoD has a role in creating the direction, but also to bring voices across the membership and stakeholders to encompass an intentional path forward and allow members to see themselves in the plan. The BoD should collaborate with the members in addition to headquarters executives, senior student affairs officers, NASPA and ACPA leaders to gather trends, research and ideas for action. Finally, I see the Board as eyes for review of drafts, identifiers of gaps in voice, action or direction. AFA's greatest opportunity is helping professionals adapt to rapid institutional and societal change while maintaining student-centered practice. AFA is uniquely called to serve our profession through advancing research, providing education on how to meet the changes in enrollment, the questions of cost sustainability for higher education, understanding political influence and the benefits and drawbacks from Artificial Intelligence. I believe AFA needs to be the drivers for knowledge gathering, best practice development and continuing to navigate the complex ecosystem of higher education with the added layer of understanding and strategically positioning the sorority/fraternity experience to thrive under these ever-changing realities and pressure.

Allocation Exercise

You receive 100 points, each of which can be spent to prioritize the board's time. Allocate these 100 points based on what priority areas you think the board should spend their time on. Allocate more points to those areas that you think are more important.

Priority Area	Points Allotted	Remarks
Annual Meeting Planning	5	The Annual Meeting is important to AFA, however, this is and should be mostly staff and volunteer driven. I believe the board helps provide direction and strategy for accomplishing goals of the Annual Meeting, but the "in the weeds" planning and execution of the meeting is not the role of the Board.
Educational Program Selection	4	The Board should be considering the large-scale educational programming that is offered through AFA in terms of topic and financial considerations. However, the micro-educational programming should be led by staff and volunteers who are uniquely selected and positioned to provide this experience. I believe the Board can provide guidance and direction based on data and members' needs at all levels of selection.
Budget Oversight and Financial Management	22	With inflation on the rise and living in a post-pandemic world where costs are different, this area needs to have a lot of the Board's energy. This is also an area where the staff may support the work of the Board but there are no volunteers to drive this area as there are with other topics. I also see this as a place to partner with the AFA Foundation to consider all venue sources and where costs can be offset.
Developing Strategy for Members' Professional Competency and Mentorship	18	This is the mission of AFA, so to me, it has to be a higher focus area for the Board. I see the Board members as those that understand the larger landscape of higher education, political impact and sorority and fraternity needs. As such, they provide a roadmap for areas to enhance professional competency, ensure members are advancing their learning and skills and bring others alongside them to support their work.
Stakeholder Outreach & Partnership (NASPA, ASCA, FSL Umbrellas, etc.)	15	I see this as partially members of the Board and partially staff's role. Each has a space in this area, which allows for the connection from those doing the work on a campus or headquarters and those who support the work to engage stakeholders in a variety of ways. I also see this as an area that drives the mission and strategic priorities for AFA. So, the Board and staff are the best positioned for this work.
Communication Strategy	4	AFA has staff to help drive and produce this area. However, I think there are times that Board needs to a leader in this space. Specifically, I think about major shifts or changes to operations, other items that impact the members. That is when I believe the Board would take a larger role in communication strategy. Additionally, ensuring we are meeting members where they are with the communication and thinking broadly about the delivery avenues should be Board consideration also.
Personnel and Association Human Resources	12	Part of the Board's role is to serve as the supervisor for the Executive Director, who supervises the central office staff. So, I believe this needs more attention and then several other areas. The Board must ensure the staff has what is needed in terms of resources, talent, and vision to advance their work, while also considering larger impact to budget and member costs and volunteer opportunities.
Creating Professional Community through Technology and Identity/Affinity Spaces	10	With the rise in costs in most areas of life, I think this area is critically important. It may be reality that members are not able to attend the Annual Meeting or other in person experiences because of costs or lack of funding from their employer. So, we must be able to support those members in a similar fashion to those who can attend in person experiences. Additionally, pr spaces for members to gather under commonalities can support member engagement and retention in this work.
Advancing Research	8	I believe the Board should help position AFA to advance research, provide funding when possible and be knowledgeable about specific things impacting the work and our realities. However, there are a variety of other stakeholders and entities better situated to advance the research needed to guide the work than the Board of Directors in my opinion.
Policy and Position Statement Development	2	This area should be considered sparingly from my lens. I believe there are times when policy and position statements may be needed, but I believe we have moved away from this work as a primary function of the Association and only use it for specific circumstances/topics (ie: hazing prevention). I do believe the Board and staff may have a role in advocacy related to legal policies that would impact the work.