



Standards of Excellence

The following Standards of Excellence, aka SOE, is used to evaluate all Fraternity and Sorority Life chapters at Southern Miss. This will determine whether an organization is in “good standing” and determine eligibility for university awards, services, and goods.

Appropriate documentation can include but not limited to the following: flyers, publicity materials from events, letters of support from participating organizations and advisors, chapter minutes, pictures, sign-in sheets, and other documentation as approved by the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff. Documentation for the seven key areas below must be turned in online through October 31st of each academic year. The new cycle for SOE will begin on December 1st of each academic year.

The SOE will put forth minimum expectations for Fraternities and Sororities to abide by and exceed in the following key areas:

1. Academics
2. Leadership & Service
3. Chapter Management
4. Membership Education & Development
5. Recruitment/Outreach
6. Health & Wellness
7. Inclusive Excellence

Points

The points given for the standards reflect a comprehensive picture of a fraternity or sorority chapter. The Fraternity and Sorority Life staff will utilize the predetermined points system.

Any chapter that does not have a chapter facility is exempt from those standards that specifically outline the management of a fraternity or sorority house and will have a different cumulative total of points than housed organizations. Points will NOT be awarded for any standards that were met due to required sanctions (i.e., community service hours, alcohol education, etc.).

Recognition of Achievements

The Standards of Excellence reflects a tremendous amount of work on chapter members, leaders, advisors, and inter/national staff and volunteers. The University is committed to assisting chapters in accomplishing the standards outlined in this document.

Chapters that meet these standards will be recognized at the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life Awards and help publicize the chapters' success and accomplishments.

Overall Achievement

90% of Total Achievable Points	Chapter of Excellence
80% of Total Achievable Points	Chapter of Achievement
70% of Total Achievable Points	Chapter of Promise
60% of Total Achievable Points	Probationary Chapter
Less than 60% of Total Achievable Points	Unrecognized Chapter (Not in Good Standing)

Providing the community with revised standards will help the FSL community improve and demonstrate their positive influence on the Southern Miss community. This information will be used as a starting point from which improvements can be made, and community growth can be measured over time. By no means does this mean chapters should create additional programming. The SOE is an opportunity to measure the current level of programming and encouraging chapter – council – campus partner collaborations.

The following describes the recognition and expectations for chapters based on their achievement level:

Recognition Levels	Recognition Action	Additional Expectations/Ramifications
Chapter of Excellence (90% of Total Points or Better)	Recognition at the annual Celebration of Leadership, Letter of Excellence from Vice President of Student Affairs sent to Headquarters, Certificates of Excellence	No additional requirements from the University
Chapter of Achievement (80% of Total Points)	Recognized at Annual Celebration of Leadership, Letter of Achievement from Dean of Students sent to Headquarters, Certificates of Achievement	Discuss areas of improvement during monthly meetings with FSL staff

Chapter of Promise (70% of Total Points)		Meet with FSL staff monthly to discuss and develop a chapter improvement plan
Probationary Chapter (60% of Total Points)		Must attain Chapter of Promise status or higher in the next cycle or lose recognition, Meet with FSL staff twice in addition to monthly meetings to ensure improvement, Establish a Redevelopment Plan
Unrecognized Chapter		Loss of Campus Privileges, Develop a complete redevelopment plan, meet with staff two times per month, improve to at least a probationary chapter within one semester, or a letter recommending withdrawal from campus recognition will be sent to Vice President of Student Affairs.

Chapters' headquarters/executive office will be sent a letter outlining their status.

Chapters' statuses will additionally be posted on the FSL Community Scorecard.

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS

(19 points)

The educational mission of Southern Miss is of central importance to a strong Fraternity and Sorority Community. To this end, it is expected that one of the primary goals of fraternities and sororities is to support academic achievement. Chapters should provide an environment that is conducive to studying and achieving academic success.

Academic Standards:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
A1	Active chapter members collectively achieved a 2.5-semester grade point average.	2
A2	New members collectively achieved a 2.5-semester grade point average.	2
A3	Chapter collectively achieved a chapter a 2.5-semester grade point average.	2
A4	Each chapter must create and complete an academic plan each semester, which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chapter GPA goal and new member GPA goal b. Semesterly Academic Plan of Action including academic event(s) & academic presentations c. Description of the role of an academic officer and academic advisor d. Academic incentives 	4
A5	Each chapter must attend two campus-hosted academic programs per semester. At least 75% of chapter members must attend. Options include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums • Speaking center presentations 	2
A6	All chapter members who do not achieve a 2.5 term or cumulative GPA must attend an academic presentation presented by a campus resource, a professor, or a staff member or schedule a meeting with an academic support campus resource. All new members must also attend an academic presentation. A non-exhaustive list of topics include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Study Skills b. Textbook reading c. Writing techniques d. Talking with professors e. Learning styles 	3
A7	All members with less than a 2.0 GPA are required to meet an academic support program which should include relevant campus programs including but not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Subject area tutoring b. Writing Center c. Speaking Center d. Study Skills Assessment e. Meeting with Center for Student Success f. Enroll in and complete academic coaching program) 	2

A8	A percentage of the chapter's budget is dedicated to academic programming. There is no requirement as to the amount.	1
A9	The chapter must have a GPA requirement for members to attend chapter-hosted social events.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter has a faculty liaison or faculty fellow. This is a university faculty member that provides academic guidance for the chapter.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter has members who hold membership in one or more academic honorary on campus. The honorary should be recognized by the university and be an honorary that hosts academic programming.	1
	(BONUS) Chapter cumulative GPA is above 3.0.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter has a .2 GPA higher than their respective All Undergrad GPA for men or women.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter has members who have received scholarships.	1

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

(22 points)

Involvement in campus life outside of Fraternity and Sorority Life is highly encouraged for all members of the FSL community. Southern Miss has a rich history of fraternity and sorority members holding leadership positions in all walks of campus life. The following standards were developed to assist chapters in fulfilling their mission and providing members an opportunity to learn from other experiences.

Leadership & Involvement Standards:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
L11	Two-thirds (66%) of chapter membership must be affiliated with at least one club, organization, agency, and/or workplace outside of their Chapter. Chapter intramural teams do not fulfill this requirement.	3
L12	The chapter actively participates in at least one virtual or in-person campus-wide event (i.e., Homecoming, Center for Community Engagement Homecoming Service Activity, Big Event, Honors College Forum session, College-hosted speaker, etc.) each semester with at least one-third 33% or 25 chapter members present, whichever is smaller.	1
L13	The chapter has a focus on external involvement and demonstrates to its members with a written description of a position whose responsibilities and expectations relates to campus involvement; one or more of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the chapter rewards members who are involved in one or more activities outside of the chapter; or the chapter promotes involvement by posting involvement opportunities or sending them via the chapter communication tool. 	1
L14	Each chapter must elect/appoint a Community Service and/or Philanthropy chair to coordinate all community service and philanthropy projects. Chapters must submit a position description, including specific responsibilities and duties.	1
L15	Complete a minimum of eight (8) community service hours per chapter member per semester, for a total of (16) community service hours per chapter member per academic year. Chapter participation in walkathons does not count for service hours unless the chapter helped plan the walk or volunteer. Giving blood may only count for two hours of service. Attempting blood donation could count for up to one hour.	2
L16	Develop one semester-long project working with one local community agency or cause. This project can be in conjunction with your national service/philanthropic activities. This requirement includes at least two engagements throughout the semester with the same agency. Submitted documentation should consist of a relationship statement.	2

LI7	Active participation in one cooperative project with another campus organization. Examples include co-hosting in another organization's philanthropic or service event. Additionally, participating in another organization's hosted service project would count toward this goal. Giving just a monetary donation does not count.	2
LI8	Participate in one IFC/NPHC/CPC sponsored community service project each semester according to the requirements set forth by the governing councils. The chapter must have a 50% participation to include semester-long service projects.	2
LI9	Raise or donate money in any amount for the chapter's philanthropy, local or national. The chapter will need to provide proof of donation by providing a copy of a cashed check or a letter from the organization stating the fraternity/sorority donated on official letterhead.	1
LI10	At least one member of the chapter is enrolled in the Leadership course for an entire year of coursework at Southern Miss.	1
LI11	Co-sponsor a non-alcohol event with an organization from each of the other councils. The chapter must have a 70% attendance participation.	3
LI12	Plan and hold a brotherhood or sisterhood event focused on organizational values. This should not be an impromptu event but instead specifically planned to promote brotherhood/sisterhood. The chapter must have a 70% attendance participation.	2
LI13	Host an event without alcohol that is open to the Southern Miss community. This can include a philanthropy, fundraiser, educational, or cultural event. Must submit community service hours through CCE	1
	(BONUS) An undergraduate member of the organization is represented on a national or regional fraternity/sorority board.	1
	(BONUS) Chapter members exceeded 8 hours of service per member.	1
	(BONUS) Chapter members exceeded 12 hours of service per member.	1

CHAPTER MANAGEMENT

(11 points)

Each chapter will responsibly conduct its internal affairs. The University values the autonomy of the undergraduate officers in making decisions that affect the chapter now and in the future. However, as organizations affiliated with an Inter/National entity and as a guest at the University, the chapter must meet obligations.

Chapter Management Standards:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
CM1	Each chapter has a chapter advisor who supports the Inter/National organization, and a letter of support for the advisor(s) should be on file.	.5
CM2	Each chapter has an active relationship with their chapter advisor (i.e., attends chapter or executive board meetings, advisor meetings, or advisor retreat).	.5
CM3	Each chapter is an active member/participant of a governing council (IFC/NPHC/CPC).	1
CM4	Each chapter organizes a minimum of one program each year that involves alumni. This can be an active or passive program. Please note that passive programming consists of participating at one's own pace.	.5
CM5	Each chapter organizes a minimum of one program each year that involves parents, family, or support system. This can be an active or passive program. Note – can be council-sponsored not to include New Initiate Presentation or Step Show.	.5
	Each chapter documents an internal judicial/conduct system's existence to enforce its policies and procedures.	1
	By the stated deadline, turns in all paperwork to IFC, NPHC, CPC, HRL, as well as to the Fraternity and Sorority Life Office. This includes monthly reports, membership rosters, dues, change of officer forms, etc.	1
	Each chapter's respective representative(s) attends the regular workshops hosted by the Fraternity and Sorority Life and their governing council (i.e., Presidents' Meeting; Spring training, Social/RM Workshops, and roundtables).	1
	The chapter has developed a budget and an adequate bookkeeping system for finances.	.5
	Each chapter has a yearly executive board training/transition workshop for new officers.	2
	Each chapter defines its own goals for the semester/year and discusses them during a monthly liaison meeting.	.5

	Each chapter president meets, at minimum, once per month with designated Fraternity and Sorority Life staff.	1
	Each chapter shall be in good financial standing with their Inter/National organization, governing council, and Southern Miss.	1
	(BONUS) Attendance by at least one member per (calendar) year to regional/national conferences/meetings (i.e., AFLV, Inter/National organization, regional seminars, National Convention, Area Conference. LeaderShape, NCGLC, National Collegiate Leadership Conference, leadership workshops, etc.).	1
	(BONUS) Advisor attends annual advisor training	1

Housed Organizations Only

The overall points required will be reduced for those organizations that do not have facilities.

H1	Each housed fraternity and sorority has a House Corporation with at least one board member residing within a 25-mile radius. The person's contact information must be on file and up to date at all times with Fraternity and Sorority Life & HRL Office.	1
H2	Each housed fraternity and sorority has lease agreements with the residents, outlining the year's expectations and policies.	1
H3	Each housed chapter maintains its property in a neat, orderly, safe, and healthy fashion and respects its neighbors' environment (including, but not limited to, upkeep of chapter house property, proper cleanup, and acceptable noise levels). FSL will do conduct the report; no submission is needed.	1
H4	Each housed chapter shall have and pass a yearly fire inspection.	1
H5	The housed chapter has a damage report under \$150 a semester	1

MEMBERSHIP EDUCATION/DEVELOPMENT

(12 points)

One of the Fraternity and Sorority community's primary goals is to further the development of our members within the community. Chapters should strive to foster the leadership potential within members throughout all stages of their Southern Miss experience. Highly educated and responsible leaders will set an example through their efforts. The development of individual members is a preeminent goal of fraternal based social organizations. Providing incentives for members to attain their goals, experience new opportunities, and realize their potential are essential values to a chapter.

Membership/Education Development Standards:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
ME1	Each chapter has a written New Member Education program, which has been approved by the inter/national organization.	2
ME2	New members for each organization shall complete New Member Orientation each semester.	2
ME3	There is a New Member Educator with a written description of the position's responsibilities and expectations.	2
ME4	Each chapter's New Member Education programs cover the following: Academics, Sexual Assault Prevention, Risk Management, Alcohol Education, Campus Involvement/Leadership, and Hazing.	2
ME5	Each chapter has a written Sponsor/Mentor Program (ex. big/little program), which includes becoming a sponsor. (i.e., currently financial with the chapter, minimum GPA).	1
ME6	Each chapter has its members attend a minimum of two educational programs or workshops each semester, with 75% of the chapter attendance. A non-exhaustive list of topics include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Values b. Personal Responsibility c. Alcohol and Drug Education d. Career Services e. Academic Success f. Wellness g. Leadership Development h. Stress Management i. Diversity <p>Note: Chapters are highly encouraged to attend external programming instead of creating additional programming within the chapter.</p>	3

RECRUITMENT/OUTREACH

(15 points)

Recruitment is an essential and vital part of the success and growth of the Fraternity and Sorority Community at SOUTHERN MISS. An undergraduate's first experience with the Fraternity and Sorority community is often the recruitment and outreach process. Therefore fraternities, sororities, and the community must do our best to project the positive values and aspects of the fraternity and sorority experience throughout the entire year.

Recruitment/Outreach Standards:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
RO1	Each chapter has a written recruitment/intake plan for each semester. It should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Academic and other requirements necessary for receiving an offer for membership b. Hazing education and prevention plans c. A written process that describes the plan to achieve goals or the prescribed process from Inter/National Organization for Rush/Recruitment/Intake 	3
RO3	Each chapter has a workshop once a semester to discuss its plan for growth and/or recruitment.	2
RO4	If eligible, the chapter recruits members each semester. This could include the formation of an interest group and hosting informational sessions. <i>Note: Please follow your Inter/National guidelines for interest groups.</i>	2
RO5	Each chapter initiates at least 70% of the extended invitations to the membership each semester.	3
RO6	Each chapter attends all Recruitment/Outreach meetings sponsored by IFC/NPHC/CPC.	3
	(BONUS) The chapter actively incorporates social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to positively promote the organization's image.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter actively engages with FSL social media page(s), including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to positively promote the organization's image.	1

HEALTH & WELLNESS

(11 points)

Southern Miss and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life strive to provide a healthy community for our members and commit to participating in programs and events that promote healthy behavior and informed decision making. Proactive risk management policies and education are essential in promoting positive behavior, and the following standards have been adopted to address these issues.

Wellness Standards:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
HW1	Each chapter has a Risk Management Chair with a written description of the position's responsibilities and expectations.	1
HW2	Each chapter complies with all governing council, FSL/University, Inter/National Organization policies, and federal, state, and local laws.	2
HW3	Each chapter attends the Risk Management/Social Chair meetings.	1
HW4	Each chapter submits to Fraternity and Sorority Life a copy of the Inter/National risk management policies and manual.	1
HW5	Each chapter submits documentation of chapter-wide education of the Southern Miss and Inter/national organization Risk Management and Hazing policies.	2
HW6	Each chapter completes chapter-wide education on the use and misuse of alcohol and drugs.	2
HW7	Each chapter must submit their current Certificate of Insurance identifying the University as an additional insured.	1
HW8	Each chapter will participate in or host sexual assault prevention programming. The chapter must have 70% participation.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter participated in National Hazing Prevention Week – 70% Chapter Participation.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter participated in Alcohol Awareness Week- 70% Chapter Participation.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter participated in Drug Awareness Week - 70% Chapter Participation.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter participated in the Body Image/Acceptance programming Week -70% Chapter Participation.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter participated in Take Back the Night -70% Chapter Participation.	1

Inclusive Excellence

(10 points)

As a community, we hope to create an environment based on equity and solidarity and actively promote human rights and dignity. A goal for fraternities and sororities is to promote education and acceptance. As students who are a part of a global community, both members and chapters must recognize the importance of diversity. Focusing on those personal attributes and identities, including but not limited to, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, disability, nationality, religion/spirituality, and sexual orientation, which make us distinct from one another, and will contribute to who we are as individuals. To assist members and their chapters in providing opportunities to learn from others' experiences, the following standards were developed.

Global Citizenship & Human Dignity:

Item	Identified Goal	pt
IE1	Chapters must have a non-discrimination policy as a part of their Constitution, Bylaws, and/or Guiding Principles.	2
IE2	Chapters provide opportunities for those brothers/sisters who cannot pay for their dues and/or programs related to their personal, academic, and/or leadership development if they are unable to cover these costs personally. This could be a reasonable payment plan that allows members flexibility to pay for their membership, a scholarship fund. Note: <i>The fund does not include payments of fines or penalties the member is personally responsible for.</i>	3
IE3	Every chapter sponsors, co-sponsors, and/or attends at least one program on campus related to diversity and social justice to increase the education of a population with which they are less familiar. Program attendance must be at least 66% (2/3). Examples of these issues include, but are not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual orientation Race/ethnicity Disability Socioeconomic status Sex/gender Religion/spirituality 	2
IE4	Chapters have created an Action Plan detailing how they can be more inclusive and welcoming to all students throughout the year, including reasonable goals and ways to achieve these goals (i.e., having a housing audit to see what can be done to make a chapter facility more inclusive for those with physical disabilities or looking into recruitment strategies and practices to encourage inclusion and promote a welcoming environment to all students). Examples of items to include in Action Plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Educational programming to accompany said goals Action items to achieve (audit, bylaws review, a focus group on identifying inclusivity barriers). 	3

IE5	(BONUS) The chapter has an active officer or committee who promotes the overall knowledge and understanding of the chapter related to issues of diversity and social justice and programming and involvement opportunities related to these issues on campus and/or in the local community.	1
	(BONUS) The chapter is involved in an ongoing project to bring about positive social change about diversity and social justice issues. (i.e., working with the local food bank throughout the year to confront hunger and work to improve conditions for those of low socioeconomic status, working at a women’s shelter to improve the lives of survivors of domestic and sexual violence, working with Humane Borders, an organization committed to humanitarian issues).	1
	(BONUS) The chapter has members who attend and participate in training, workshops, and/or retreats related to marginalized student identities or have members who have been certified through workshops related to marginalized student identities (race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, disability, religion/spirituality, and sexual orientation) (i.e., SafeZone certification).	1
	(BONUS) The chapter has members who are involved in coursework, internships, or clubs that directly relates to cultural/ethnic studies and/or relates to other underrepresented groups (i.e., Gender and Women’s Studies)	1

Resources used in the formation of the Standards of Excellence:

- San Jose State University 2016 Standards of Excellence
- The University of Arizona 2018 Standards of Excellence
- California State University, Long Beach 2019 Standards of Excellence
- North American Interfraternity Conference Standards
- National Panhellenic Conference Manual of Information