

Our commitment to

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS

Sisters,

The events of the past few weeks on top of the challenges from the ongoing pandemic are weighing heavy on all of our hearts and minds. We know each of us has been affected in different ways and many of us have no experience to draw upon as we navigate these difficult times. It has been reassuring to see so many sisters continuing to Live with Heart, speaking up in solidarity to support our Black sisters, holding our organization accountable to our own values, and taking the time to educate ourselves and each other on how to actively fight racism and social injustice.

All of us are traveling in the same direction – forward, honoring our values of friendship and personal growth as we strive to do better to support and care for ourselves and each other. While we have made organizational progress since our diversity & inclusion initiative was launched in 2018, we know there is still so much more work to do. We also know our success is dependent on the help, feedback and actions of our individual members.

We need to do more to assure our Sisters of Color and other underrepresented women feel welcomed, included and empowered in our organization. While words matter, our actions will matter more. To demonstrate this commitment to action, national council, the Foundation board of trustees, the National Housing Corporation board of directors and the staff of all three entities have been working collaboratively to develop immediate next steps on how all three entity boards and staffs will continue to make diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) a priority throughout the organization.



NEXT STEPS

- We will invest in immediate and ongoing professional education on diversity, equity, inclusion and access for national council, the Foundation board of trustees, the National Housing Corporation board of directors, and the national headquarters staff of all three entities. We are working to identify a facilitator and plan to begin training by August.
- We will engage an expert in the field of diversity, equity, inclusion and access as we know we are not subject-matter experts. This work will be funded with a grant from the Sigma Kappa Foundation. We will look for the expert to identify Sigma Kappa's needs and opportunities in this area and to create professional resources to move us forward.
- We will create a committee called the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Committee. This group will be made up of alumnae and collegiate members who are Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color; LGBTQIA+ Women; and Women with Disabilities as well as a representative from each entity. The committee will:
 - Provide feedback and advice to Sigma Kappa national council, Foundation board of trustees, National Housing Corporation board of directors, and staff of all three entities on how the boards' efforts will affect inclusion, diversity, equity and access across the organization.
 - Assist in implementing Sigma Kappa's DEIA action plan, developed with the assistance of an outside expert.
 - Ensure the boards and staff are aware of emerging trends within DEIA so Sigma Kappa understands how those developments impact the organization.
 - Work with (i) the committees responsible for recommending board members of the three entities and (ii) the volunteers and staff responsible for appointing and hiring Sigma Kappa volunteers and staff to identify opportunities for greater inclusion and ascension of Women of Color and other underrepresented groups into leadership and staff positions within Sigma Kappa.
 - Work side-by-side with three committee members appointed by the Sorority, Foundation and National Housing Corporation.



OUR COMMITMENT

- We commit to providing quarterly updates in the *Sigma Kappa Triangle* and other Sigma Kappa communications on our progress on these and future initiatives in this area.
- National council will require all collegiate chapters to include a DEIA chairwoman as part of their leadership structure.

- National council has encouraged collegiate chapters to adopt this new position since it was announced in 2018, and 92 of our chapters have since elected a member to serve in this position. One of the 2020 *Bylaws* proposals was to make a DEIA chairwoman a required position for all collegiate chapters. Due to the cancellation of the in-person convention experience, the *Bylaws* proposals were withdrawn and will be presented in 2022. National council will be adding this chairwoman position requirement to national policy until we have a format to make it official in our *Bylaws*.
- A creative team is being formed to create additional resources to support this role. Please see below for how you can show interest in the creative team.
- We will change all references of "chairman" to "chairwoman."
- We will continually ask ourselves how we are including our Women of Color and other underrepresented women as we strive to make our membership more diverse.
- We are creating recruitment resources to educate collegiate chapters and advisors about DEIA as they prepare for fall 2020 recruitment.
- The Sigma Kappa Foundation is commissioning a workgroup to look at the mission-based ways it can use its resources to have a positive impact in DEIA. The group will identify barriers that exist for our members and potential members from underrepresented groups, solutions to help eliminate those barriers, opportunities to strengthen our commitment to DEIA, and other ways in which the Sigma Kappa Foundation can provide resources to support our sisters in these areas.



HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Each entity is committed to DEIA conversations together and individually. Below is how you can show your interest and get involved.

- If you are interested in helping Sigma Kappa move this initiative forward, please apply for the **DEIA Committee** using [this form](#). The deadline for all applications is **July 6**. For this committee, we are specifically looking for alumnae and collegiate Women of Color, LGBTQIA+ Women and Women with Disabilities. Your voice and perspectives are critical to our success.
- Interested in applying for the **Sigma Kappa Foundation workgroup**? Show your interest [here](#).
- Have ideas or suggestions on how **DEIA impacts housing**? Email [Casey Keller](#), NHC executive director, to share your ideas.
- Interested in serving on a **Sigma Kappa creative team**? Creative team members work with the programming team to provide programming solutions to meet the development needs of the organization, including those related to DEIA. If interested, please contact [Christian Gamm](#), national vice president for programming.



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

If you have questions or would like to provide feedback or share your stories, please email us at inclusion@sigmakappa.org.

Loyally in Sigma Kappa,

Ann O'Connell Adams, *Theta*
National President

Dawn Copple O'Connor, *Tau*
Foundation President

Susan Willis, *Epsilon Epsilon*
National Housing Corporation President