



Building Block Council of the Year:

Greek Court Council

2009 – 2010

President: Jess Montgomery
VP of Housing and Retention: Amanda Adams
VP of Programming: Lesley Winslow
VP of Community Service: Cally Tubbs
Secretary: Lauren Patterson
Treasurer: Alexandria Tucker
RHA Liaison: Lindsay Bohlin
PHC Liaison: Carrie Murphy
Advisor: Lia-Monte' Hunter

TABEL OF CONTENTS

Title Page

Introduction/Structure

Attendance

Budget

Goals

Academics

Favorite Programs

Community Service

Recognition

Strengths

Weaknesses

Improvements

Additional Thoughts/Conclusion

Letter of Support: Carissa Coon (Panhellenic President)

INTRODUCTION/STRUCTURE

Greek Court was built during the 1990's, and is considered an "untraditional residence hall." Living here is truly a unique experience unlike any other housing complex. Currently, nineteen organizations reside here each representing the three national governing councils: Interfraternity Council (IFC), Panhellenic Council (PHC), and National Panhellenic Council (NPHC). Each Chapter is individual, with their own rules, goals, philanthropies, and rituals each set up by their own National Headquarters so each living quarter and organization is a different experience. In Greek Court, our residents do not get assigned to us like in traditional residence halls. Instead, the organizations decide the living arrangements. The person in charge of housing for each chapter is called the house manager, they are also referred to as a Greek Court Council delegate because part of their responsibility is to attend GCC bi-weekly meetings.

The structure of the council consists of an executive board, minor executive board, and a group of 19 delegates. The executive board is made up of the President, Vice President of Housing and Retention, Vice President of Programming, Vice President of Community Service, Treasurer, Secretary, and Advisor of the Board while the minor executive board consists of a RHA Liaison, IFC Liaison, PHC Liaison, and NPHC Liaison. The executive and minor executive board meets every week to plan upcoming events, but the delegates only are required to attend meetings every other week.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at council meetings is mandatory for each board member, and expected for the delegates as well. It is taken at the beginning of each house manager meeting. If delegates anticipate absence, the executive board asks that they send a proxy in their place to be sure their house is represented at every meeting. If a delegate misses more than two meetings without excuses they lose their voting privilege in the council for the rest of the semester. Greek Court Council is proud to say that attendance has improve drastically compared to the 2008-2009 academic year, and has also spiked from the fall 2009 semester to spring 2010 semester. In the

past years, the bare minimum of delegates was attending each meeting; this year, however, there are on average at least 17 of the 19 delegates present at every meeting.

BUDGET

Unlike in traditional residence halls, Greek Court does not collect dues from its residents. In the years past, Greek Court Council has functioned on very little income; however, this year the Housing and Dining Department put their faith in the 2009-2010 Greek Court Council and decided to help us to establish ourselves. The Greek Court Council Executive Board is very thankful for the Housing and Dining Department's generosity. Without their support and sponsorship—the Council could truly not have functioned or accomplished what they had set out to do.

GOALS

The council had many goals that they wanted to accomplish this year which included: Allowing chapters to have their voices heard in regards to Greek Housing, to continue with what the previous councils have already established/accomplished and to set a new standard for future Greek Court Councils to achieve, to better educate our delegates on their responsibilities and their role in housing, continue to serve the Greek Life and Charleston community, and to get more involved with RHA. This year's council is excited to have reached many of their goals this year.

A forum was held in October with Robyn Carr (Interim Director of Fraternity and Sorority Programs), Kelly Miller (Assistant Director of Housing), and Mark Hudson (Director of Housing and Dining). All house managers and Chapter presidents were in attendance along with other Greek Court residents to voice their concerns and to clear up some misconceptions about Greek housing. The forum was very educational and everyone left this meeting feeling better.

In the past, Greek Court Council has only participated in Greeks, Ghosts, and Goblins. This year we did participate in this event, but also added a spirit banner competition and several other programs/events accomplishing our goal of expanding what we have done already. We used what we had and built on it to gain a better footing and improve our programs. We are excited about the many programs we have held this year.

Each year before the school year starts in the fall, there is a retreat for presidents, house managers, and Greek Court Council Board Members. This retreat was established to go over the rules of housing, their roles in housing and Greek Court Council, and to clarify rules that their National organizations require. After the fall semester, most Chapters appoint a new house manager for the spring semester. Therefore, this year, The Executive Board repeated the retreat at the beginning of the spring semester instead of waiting till fall when half of the house manager's term had already been completed. Hopefully, that will make the council more prepared for next year, and may allow for the leaders of housing to go over other important information during the retreat in the fall.

Each Greek organization is required to complete 300 hours of community service each semester. Community Service is something that Greeks pride themselves on, and a big reason why many students decide to rush an organization. IFC, PHC, and NPHC all provide several opportunities to complete these hours, and Greek Court Council wanted to do their part. Greek Court Council has accomplished many community service activities and even adopted a philanthropy which will be discussed in detail later in this application.

Our last goal we set out to do was to become more involved with RHA. In the several years past, Greek Court Council has not been consistently recognized or in attendance. Thankfully, due to the dedication and passion of our RHA Liaison, Greek Court Council is able to give its opinion, ideas, and help to the governing council. The Council will continue to make strides in this area, and hopefully become a more prominent member of the Governing Council and voting body.

ACADEMICS

Each Chapter and its members are required to obtain a minimum GPA to be considered in good standing. In other words, those individuals who do not meet the specified academic requirements are not allowed to participate in Greek Life events such as: homecoming, Greek Week, recruitment, and/or running for offices/holding leadership positions. Many chapters also do not allow their members to participate in social events (whether they are events for their Chapter or of a different Chapter) if a member does not have an adequate GPA. The minimum cumulative grade requirement for IFC and NPHC is 2.5, however, just recently PHC raised the minimum GPA to 2.7.

Due to the strict grade requirements, and in order to ensure that every student succeeds, every Chapter has an academics chair that keeps everything in check. They also work hand-in-hand with academic overalls on the IFC, PHC, and NPHC Executive Boards. The academics chair is responsible for the grades of the Chapter and its members individually. They are there to offer academic guidance, motivate their members, inform members of upcoming dates related to academics, and create a positive study environment. Most Chapters' provide study hours or study tables, and each building in Greek Court (aside from Sigma Phi Epsilon) is equipped with a study room located between the two Chapters. This helps students to stay on task and to utilize their peers' educational strengths in areas that they themselves may be lacking in. By providing opportunities for students to excel academically, Greek Life encourages their members to value their schoolwork and education they receive here at Eastern Illinois University.

FAVORITE PROGRAMS

In traditional residence halls, the programs put on by the hall councils are designed to encourage participation and getting their residents to socialize in a fun, safe, and alcohol-free environment. Greek Life does require such programs as well; however, they are called dry functions and educationals. Each Chapter must host/attend 3 dry functions and 3 educationals each semester—each with a different Chapter. These programs are put on and organized by the Chapters themselves, and not Greek Court Council. The programs put on in Greek Court are designed more to promote unity throughout the Greek Life community, which include on and off campus residents. Some of our favorite programs included: Greeks, Ghosts, and Goblins banner competition, Early Bird Contract Competition, The Unity Tree, Valentines Day Fundraiser, and St. Patrick's Day Programs.

During Greeks, Ghosts, and Goblins (described later in the application) Greek Court Council held a competition to see which Chapter could make the most creative banner to be displayed outside their house during the event. The theme The Council chose was "Trick-or-Treat, Greeks are Sweet." Each Chapter must decorate to the theme, be creative and appropriate, and include every Greek Organization on their banner. Delta Delta Delta won the competition and received pizza at their following Chapter meeting.

In November Greek Court Council had a competition between Chapters to see which organization could get the most early-bird contracts signed for the following year. The winners would receive money to be used for the betterment of that Chapter's chapter room. Sigma Kappa and Alpha Phi both had 22 members complete early bird contracts, and will split the prize money evenly.

In December Greek Court Council had planned on buying a Christmas tree to be displayed in the middle of Greek Court (commonly referred to as "the egg"). Each Chapter made Christmas ornaments with their letters on it to be placed on the tree, which was used to give a visual representation of Greek unity. Greek Court Council also collected toys from this event which were donated to the Children of the Coles County HOPE center, the battered women's shelter in Charleston.

For the month of February, Greek Court Council held its first annual Valentines Day fundraiser for all Greek Chapter. Greek members could purchase a "love note" that would be hand delivered to any member in the Greek community. Each note came with a gift and was read aloud in front of the Chapter. It was a great activity to unite organizations while having a little fun.

Finally, in March, Greek Court Council held the "Why We are Lucky to Live In Greek Court" program. Members were given shamrock cut outs and wrote down reasons they enjoyed living in our "residence hall." This program was used to also promote living here, and to get potential new residents excited about living here. The shamrocks were displayed on the wall next to the desk in the NPHC building. This program also encouraged Chapters to thank their BSW's and explain why they are lucky to have them.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Greek community has prided itself on the ability and opportunity to give back. Community Service activities are constantly provided by IFC, PHC, and NPHC to help organizations reach their 300 hour requirement; and in addition, Greek Court Council has added the chance for members to give back as well.

Each year Greek Court has provided the children of Charleston with a safe place to trick or treat with its Greeks, Ghosts, and Goblins program. Greek Court is temporarily turned into a Halloween paradise for a week with child appropriate decorations, welcome signs, and bowls of carefully picked candy. Greek Court is careful to sponsor this event at a well lit time of day and within the hours of the Charleston trick- or- treat designated times.

The Council also decided to collect toys during the holidays for the HOPE Center, a battered women's shelter. The HOPE Center feared that the children would not receive any toys this year for the holidays so Greek Court Council quickly gathered numerous toys provided by the Greek Court Chapters, and we were able to give the children residing in the HOPE Center a bountiful Christmas.

The most exciting and largest stride The Council has made this year is selecting a philanthropy, The Coles County Animal Shelter. The Council is currently collecting different items to be donated to the shelter and looking at ways to raise money for a new building. The chapter that collects the most items will receive \$100 donated to their organizations specific philanthropy.

The last community service event that Greek Court Council has planned for the year is a blood drive on April 22 from 1pm – 6pm in the Grand Ballroom. This event is open to the entire campus, and Greek Court residents will be volunteering to help at this event.

RECOGNITION

Greek Court Council has become a much more recognizable Council in the Greek community, but all of our success could not have been done without the dedication of our delegates. This year, The Council created the "Home is Where the Heart Is" Award which will be given to the house manager of the semester. Qualifications for this award include: 100% attendance, constant communication between their Chapter and The Council, and great idea's and input to enhance The Council. There is also an award given to the Executive Board member of the year, as decided by the President and Advisor, thanking them for all of their support and dedication to The Council. Finally, The Greek Court Council Advisor will be giving away a leadership award to the member of The Council that demonstrates outstanding leadership, drive, and improvements that they have made to help The Council excel. The Council had hoped to give out their awards at the Greek Week Awards Banquet, but due to timing, Greek Court Council is having their own Awards Banquet at their last meeting before they turn over the new Executive Board.

STRENGTHS

The strengths of Greek Court Council has become more apparent then every before over this past year. We are able to come together, collaborate ideas, set goals, and make plans well, and our different experiences

from our own Chapters has helped us to see different perspectives. We are also excited that Greek Court Council has become a recognizable Council among the Greek Community and Housing and Dining Department. The council has made great achievements with fundraising during Valentine's Day, community service by hosting a toy drive for the HOPE Center, sponsoring a blood drive, and taking on a new philanthropy. And finally, one of our greatest strengths will be in the transitioning of officers and being able to strengthen the communication between our council, the different Chapters, and our governing Councils. Greek Court Council has learned a lot about its self and hopes that future council will continue to become stronger.

WEAKNESSES

Some of the weaknesses Greek Court Council possesses are that we have a hard time receiving feedback from all of the residents of Greek Court. Without feedback, we are unable to receive suggestions about what works and what isn't work which makes it hard to make improvements. We also do not always receive the best participation from all of the houses in Greek Court, which most of the time happens to be the fraternity houses. This may be because we currently do not have an IFC Liaison, but someone has filled this position for next year. Another weakness is the lack of resources we have for programs, or that we may wait too long to plan and end up having to scramble and/or put our programs on hold. This is the first Greek Court Council to actually experiment and try new things to improve the council and Greek Court—we are learning what works and what does not work and will transition our results to the next Greek Court Council Executive Board.

IMPROVEMENTS

It is important before explaining what improvements can be made to our council to explain the improvements that have been made in just a year's time. At 2009 Executive elections Greek Court Council was a bit of a mess. There was not much structure, and Greek Court house managers did not take it seriously. Attendance was non-existent, community service was just an idea, and programs were few and far between. There were a lot of improvements to be made, but luckily a determined Executive Board was elected. The eight girls from all different sororities that were elected vowed to change The Council when first elected, lived by the theme "never give up," and "don't count us out," and this vow was followed up. Since then Greek Court Council has put on a number of programs, has planned three separate community service events, and has had

outstanding attendance. There has been so much accomplished in Greek Court as well, such as safety improvements, improved housing contracts in individual chapters, and even six times more interest in becoming an executive member. At last year's elections there were very few people to choose from, all girls, but this year the council has sixty outstanding individuals to select the seven best from.

After saying all this, the council is still not perfect. There are things that still need to be improved as the council gets more and more established. One improvement that is very important to the council is getting more involved in RHA. At the moment there is one representative who attends RHA meetings, but Greek Court does not get involved in many RHA activities. As a Council of RHA it is important to us to start to participate with our fellow Councils. We have just elected three representative for next year, so our participation will increase.

Another improvement that would make our council even stronger is encouraging residents to live in Greek Court. While the Council has seen an improvement in numbers from last year there is always room for more. The experience of living in Greek Court can be made even more positive by providing even more information and encouraging those living off campus that there are numerous benefits to living in Greek Court.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS/CONCLUSION

In past years, Greek Court Council has been non-existent among the Greek Community and the Housing and Dining Department/RHA. At the beginning of the year, all that The Council was given was a constitution that hadn't been updated since 2005 and our Presidents one year of experience as a secretary; other than that, we were a group of eight girls with know idea what to do and a brand new advisor with no idea what Greek Court was or what it was suppose to be. We are excited about everything we have accomplished this year and hope that it will continue. Greek Court Council first has to learn how to stand on their own, till we can learn how to walk, and eventually run. We are on our way, and when we get there—there will be no stopping us!

Letter of Support:

Carissa Coon
Panhellenic President

To Whom It May Concern:

This year, Jessica Montgomery and her executive board have worked tirelessly to revamp Greek Court Council. They turned a previously weak and laughed upon council into a functioning and respectable organization. The hard work and dedication that the Council put in this year has laid the foundation so that future Greek Court Councils can excel and thrive.

Within Greek Life, it is commonplace for organizations to have philanthropic partners and events. In the past, Greek Court Council has neglected to organize philanthropic efforts. This year, the Council choose to begin a partnership with the Coles County Animal Shelter. By doing so, they have coordinated efforts to have the chapters within Greek Court donate pet supplies and volunteer at the local shelter. Also, Greek Court Council is in preparation of hosting a Red Cross Blood Drive during Greek Week. This particular blood drive is one of the bigger drives that the Red Cross hosts at EIU; they choose very wisely when selecting organizations to sponsor such an important drive.

As a Greek student and leader, I truly appreciate the work that Greek Court Council has done this year. The work and efforts of the Council portray Greek Life in a positive aspect on campus, something that the Greek Community is not always granted. I think that by showcasing that true values of Greek Life, particularly philanthropy, the Council has been able to show students, that wouldn't typically interact with Greek Life, what we are really about.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Greek Court Council has truly done a remarkable job this year. Good luck in your selection process.

Carissa Coon
Panhellenic President