

WILDCAT CHAT

Fraternity & Sorority Life Newsletter

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Happy Halloween!

The University of Kentucky believes education is the way to create social change. Because we have all witnessed the unacceptable displays of cultural appropriation and the disrespect they bring to others, we ultimately strive to educate our students on appropriate costumes. We want to create the environment where any race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or any other qualities that define our students' diverse backgrounds, feel valued and welcomed.



Policy of the Week | AR 6:1 Discrimination and Harassment

Referencing the University expectation of appropriate Halloween behavior, our [policy](#) of discrimination and harassment supplies sufficient evidence to the commitment of respect for the dignity and worth of all members of the community. The University works tirelessly to ensure that every stakeholder with the university feels respected, valued, and has the opportunity to succeed. The policy is in-depth, leaving no grey area to be misinterpreted, and maintains a sense of clarity that each individual is aware of prohibited acts and sanctions. The policy then explains procedures available through the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity, where determination is made from facts on a case-by-case basis, if an incident were to occur. This resource is key for our supporters to recognize, so they can assist in being examples and continuous leaders. We strive for our students to develop diverse and respecting thoughts of and towards others, to cultivate a community where each student belongs.

University Resource | B.I.R.T.

BIRT stands for Bias Incident Response Team and is through the Office for Institutional Diversity. Carol Taylor-Shim, Bias Incident Response Coordinator explains, "BIRT is the University's official reporting structure for acts of bias, hatred, and identity-based violence and is responsible for reviewing reports, disseminating reports to the appropriate University officials." The BIRT was created in response to a call from students who were seeking a centralized place to report instances of hate, racism, and bias people were experiencing on campus. The BIRT also tracks trends on campus and provides guidance and feedback to University leadership around cultivating a culture of belonging. This program is key to creating a culture in which every single student, staff, and faculty member feel and believe they belong at UK and UK belongs to them.

It is important to know:

1. that BIRT reports can be made anonymously
2. There are two types of BIRT reports: TAKE ACTION, meaning the reporter has an expectation that the university will look into the incident and possibly engage in an investigation if necessary. INFORMATION ONLY reports are sent in with no expectation from the reporter that the University will take any action other than using the information to track trends, develop programming, and guide policies.
3. Any targets or witnesses to BIRT reports will receive and outreach email from Bias Incident Support Services (BISS) outlining the confidential support and advocacy this office provides to anyone impacted by an instance of hate, bias, racism or any other type of identity-based violence. Anyone can access BISS services at any time. A BIRT report is NOT a requirement for accessing support. BISS was established to provide services to people experiencing trauma and stress due to their actual or perceived identities being targeted.

Chapter Feature | Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity



SigEp will be celebrating 116 years on November 1st! Founded at the now University of Richmond, the organization has since grown to 228 chapters with around 15,000 undergraduate members. This fraternity focuses on creating a "balanced man" through five philosophical tenets. First, gaining full membership upon joining the fraternity through *equal rights and responsibilities*. Then, focusing on *continuous development* to continue personal growth throughout life. Next, committing to SigEp's high standards through *accountability* and focusing on *living the ritual* by incorporating SigEp's values into everyday life. Finally, *mentoring* to maximize growth through guidance and support. Specifically at UK, SigEp is celebrating their 2nd full year on campus after gaining their recognition! They love supporting the community by teaming up with other chapters on campus to help make a difference.

Staff Spotlight | Benjamin Powell

Benjamin Powell, a native of Hattisburg, Mississippi, has been a part of our staff since August 2016, as the house director for Delta Sigma Phi fraternity. He joined us after serving as a graduate assistant for the Student Financial Aid Office at the University of Louisville, where he also worked with the Office of Fraternity/Sorority Life. Benjamin ultimately enjoys seeing students grow and achieve and observes this weekly with Junior Interfraternity Council and Junior Panhellenic Council. These councils are available for new members to develop themselves in the Greek community. By assisting with these organizations, he is able to witness students successfully navigate issues on their own. Benjamin also oversees all mental health initiatives, works to build our marketing plan, and pursues the success of cross council collaboration efforts. We absolutely value his drive to personally connect and build relationships with students and always brings the perspective to simply be available to students, because "you never know what an open door can mean to them". We are so privileged to have him on our team and as a resource to students!



Required Forms

Each semester, the chapters have sets of required forms available to them on OrgSync, with varying due dates. Currently, there are a four forms due November 17th at 5pm. The forms include, Chapter Sponsored Service, Individual Member Service, Chapter Sponsored Philanthropy, and Campus Involvement and Leadership from Fall 2017. The forms assist us in knowing where our community stands in partnering with others, the impact they are making, and the standards they are holding themselves and others to. We strive to have a growing community and believe that service efforts are a priority for our students.