To: President Chuck Staben  
From: Jean Kim, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Chair of SLTF *  
Subject: Student Life Task Force Recommendation One  
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2016

The Student Life Task Force began its work in mid-September with the charge to: Examine how UI currently supports the first-year students and their overall transition to the university with a special focus on their residential experience; Identify potential improvements in Housing & Residence Life; Explore the impact of how we recruit first-year students to join the Greek system and housing them in Greek chapter houses; and Examine how Greek Life contributes to the residential experience and whether it can be strengthened by any changes in practice.

We reviewed our residential options for first year students and examined Residence Hall information e.g., occupancy by building and by class, capacity, first year programs, staffing, costs for room & board. We also reviewed information on Sororities and Fraternities: 2015 outcomes of Greek recruitment, all chapters with houses on occupancy, capacity, first year student programs, staffing, membership cost, room & board. Steel House, women’s coop, which is considered to be on-campus housing option although independently operated was also reviewed. They are working on building a new structure for potential occupancy for fall 2017, and are working closely with Housing and Residence Life on training of their RA who also participates in the Residence Life staff meetings. Also included in our discussions was the result of the first year retention by residency from our Institutional Research & Assessment Office.

A number of external documents such as the Gallup study on the Effects of Fraternity and Sorority membership, Education and retention benefits of residence hall living, Greek life practices from 33 universities representing our peer and west regional universities, and Recruitment best practices were considered as well.

We also developed and conducted two internal studies: An on-line survey of first and second year students on their first year experience and focus group interviews with 11 groups (Parents Advisory Council, Greek Presidents Council, Residence Hall Association, Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, Chapter Advisors, Residence Hall Directors, ASUI Senators, House Directors, Residence Hall Alumni in Boise area, and Residence Hall Alumni in Spokane/Coeur d’Alene area).

While we have more data to analyze from the focus group interviews and other university statistics, the STLF is ready to make the first recommendation to you now, influenced primarily by two important research outcomes regarding the first year experience. The first is the First year Retention by Residency study that indicated (controlling for various factors such as HGPA, first gen, SEC) the retention rate of first year students are higher in the Greek chapter houses than in the residence halls, 88% vs 79% (with one exception being the Upham LLC which was
the same as Greek houses). The second is the outcome of the research on first year experience. We were able to glean from the survey results that providing options for first year students to choose their residency is important to all students. In addition, when asked where they would elect to live, between residence halls and Greek housing, if they could start over again, most students would make the same decisions on housing with a higher % of Greeks choosing Greek housing. Another important result we noted was only about 10% of students indicated that all first year students living together would have improved their first year experience.

**Given these outcomes, our first recommendation is for the UI to continue the current system of providing first year housing options that include Greek chapter houses, Residence halls, and Steel House Co-op.**

We anticipate making more recommendations, as we review the remaining data at our subsequent meetings, which will improve the residential experience in the residence halls and in Greek chapter houses, and changing practices that may improve the overall first year residential experience at the UI. Our projected timeline for completing the remaining recommendations is by April 2016 at the latest. Please let me know if you require further information.

* Student Life Task Force Members

Erin Agidius '01, '11, Interim Director of HRAI, Kappa Alpha Theta Alumnae
Dan Alsaker '72, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Alumnus
Blaine Eckles '11, Dean of Students
Frances Ellsworth '83, Gamma Phi Beta Alumnae
Sandy Fery '81, Delta Delta Delta Alumnae
Marilyn Fordham '57, Delta Gamma Alumnae
Dee Dee Kanikkeberg, Director of Housing & Residence Life
Jean Kim, Chair, Vice Provost for Student Affairs
Troy LaVigne '17, IFC President, Delta Tau Delta
McKenzie MacDonald '19, ASUI Senator
Kent Nelson '80, '84, General Counsel, Sigma Chi Alumnus
David Pfeiffer, Director of Office of Undergraduate Research; Prof. of Biological Sciences
Caleb Quates '19, Vice President for Residence Hall Association
Dick Reilly '81, Phi Delta Theta Alumnus
Laird Stone '75, '78, Alpha Kappa Lambda Alumnus