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Cal Poly Interfraternity Council Announces That Rushing Will Be Deferred for New Students

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Leaders of Cal Poly's Interfraternity Council today announced a new plan that will bar new students from joining fraternities during their first quarter of enrollment.

The change, effective fall quarter 2010, applies to both freshmen and transfer students. The aim, said Interfraternity Council President Andrew Farrell, is to give students who are new to the Cal Poly campus a chance to acclimate and establish themselves academically and socially before they think about the time-consuming and demanding process of joining a social organization.

It's the latest in a series of changes Cal Poly's Greek system is adopting in the wake of the alcohol-related death of freshman Carson Starkey in an alleged hazing incident that occurred while he was pledging a fraternity in December 2008.

"In the wake of Carson's tragic death, we've seen the need for changes in Cal Poly's Greek Life system," said Farrell, a member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity. "We are working to make those changes. This is just one step in an ongoing process. It's also an opportunity for those of us in the Greek system to be who we say we are."

That process began in early 2009 with a series of intensive meetings between Cal Poly administrators and the Greek organizations' student leaders. Those meetings created a first-ever Interfraternity Council mission statement supported by all of the council's 17 represented fraternities. Also compliance requirements were expanded to hold fraternities and individual members accountable for failure to adhere to risk-management guidelines and require full disclosure regarding recruitment and new-member activities.

Cal Poly fraternities also are cooperating with the San Luis Obispo Police Department on recent changes to city ordinances aimed at tamping down disturbances from student partying. The changes hold party sponsors to a higher level of accountability regarding allowing minors to be in possession of alcohol. Since they took effect this fall quarter, city police officials confirm there has been a decline in the number of calls for police response to Cal Poly fraternity residences near campus.

1 of 2 2/18/10 9:19 AM

"The university has worked closely with the students in the Greek organizations to help them make changes in their programs. We want them to have healthy, growing organizations that are safe for everyone," said Stephan Lamb, Cal Poly's associate director of Student Life and Leadership. "This approach, characterized by commitment on the part of the students with compliance expectations from the university, has resulted in real and meaningful change."

For more details on Cal Poly's Greek organizations, visit www.studentlife.calpoly.edu/greek/index.asp.

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2 of 2 2/18/10 9:19 AM