

# MIT FSILG ACCREDITATION

## Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee Academic Year 2012-13

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## Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee

### Academic Year 2012-13

#### Abstract

This report describes the Accreditation Program during the 2012-13 academic year, as developed and operated by the Association of Independent Living Groups (AILG). The AILG Accreditation Program is an organized peer review of the living groups within the MIT Fraternity, Sorority, and Independent Living Group (FSILG) community. This was a very active and productive year, and the program's processes have developed to and continue as a mature, steady-state operation. The findings of the Visiting Committees are summarized in the body of this report and presented in detail in the appendices. In particular, there were many “best practices” identified, some of which were developed independently by several living groups. The Visiting Committees also pointed out areas where our living groups need improvement and have documented lessons learned that living groups should avoid having to learn independently. We believe the process of review as carried out under this program has led to an overall improvement in the FSILG community.

#### Overview

The program has been under development for a decade and has evolved considerably over that time. This was the sixth year in which the program was operated by the volunteer Accreditation Committee. This group met monthly to plan operations and to advise and direct the part-time Accreditation Coordinator. With this formal structure, the program is considered to be in regular operation. Our processes continue to evolve to become more and more robust, and the program assists our members to thrive and become stronger. As our members improve, we continue to raise the bar for all and find new areas to evaluate and new problems to solve. As the value of the program becomes more apparent, our member organizations are more willing to participate in and cooperate with the process. The interviews by Visiting Committees consist of conversations which are rich and mutually beneficial, resulting in more information sharing and cooperation between sometimes competing organizations. Because the process requires alumni and undergraduates to work together, and by requiring alumni organizations to be truly involved with organizational operations, we have observed greater inter-generational cooperation. By sending both men and women to evaluate FSILGs we have fostered cooperation across genders and better understanding of organizational diversity.

A total of 23 reviews at 22 different FSILGs were conducted this academic year. During the Fall Term, 14 reviews were conducted, and during the Spring Term, 9 reviews were conducted. The Spring reviews included a second review for one of the organizations reviewed in the Fall. An additional 6 reviews (including one second review) had been scheduled for April, but due to the campus and citywide crisis two days before the final review date, the last set of reviews for the Spring semester were deferred into the next academic year. The year ended with all organizations

recommended for accreditation, although in two cases the Visiting Committee expressed “reservations.” These two organizations were found to need improvements in areas of governance, oversight, and recruitment, and will be revisited during Fall 2013. One organization recommended for accreditation was invited for a one-year review, to ensure recent improvements in internal programs and processes are successful and well-implemented. The assistance of experienced volunteers and MIT staff is being offered to all organizations found to be needing improvement. Our past observation has been that in most of the cases where Visiting Committees have expressed reservations, or have withheld a recommendation for accreditation, we have seen progress and cooperation between alumni and undergraduates for improvement.

The balance of the report is organized as follows. Section 1 provides some of the highlights of the 2012-13 academic year. Section 2 outlines the Program Objectives. Section 3 provides an outline of the AILG-organized accreditation review approach. Section 4 summarizes the results of the Accreditation Program for this year, providing an overview of the review status. Section 5 gives a summary of areas where the Accreditation Program can and should be improved, and provides planning information for next year. Section 6 acknowledges everyone who gave time and resources over the 2012-13 year to the Accreditation Program. Section 7 provides references to online resources to find more information about the AILG and the Accreditation Program for readers so inclined.

Appendices A, B, and C summarize the results and observations documented by the Visiting Committees this past academic year.

Also, we have compiled a Compendium of the complete review reports from all of the 23 reviews run in the 2012-13 Accreditation Program. This document is available only by request to members of the MIT AILG community. Any responses to reviews received from the FSILGs are also included in the Compendium.

## 1. Highlights of the 2012-13 Academic Year

The 2012-13 academic year was a busy one for the Accreditation Program, and included two major highlights that deserve special mention in this report. First is the system for the Basic Data Form (BDF) that centralizes data for multiple editors to have easy access. Second is our progress at recruiting new volunteers, including several from organizations that had never before provided volunteers.

1.1. New Basic Data Form System. The new BDF system developed for the previous year continues to make preparation for reviews easier for both organizations and reviewers. Since our process involves a two-year cycle, the second year of operation extended use of this system to all of our organizations. All prior BDFs are now stored within the system under cryptographic security and are available at any time to the participating organizations. Data from prior years is automatically carried forward making it easier for our members to update their BDF for each new review cycle.

1.2. Increased Participation of FSILGs in Visiting Committees. The Accreditation Committee stated last year that a goal was to have each and every FSILG provide at least one member to serve on a Visiting Committee. Our intent was twofold: first, to alleviate volunteer burnout, and second, to foster sharing of ideas by having volunteers bring ideas they observe back to their own organizations. While we did not meet our goal of at least one volunteer from each living group, we were successful in recruiting alumni/ae volunteers from three organizations which had not previously provided volunteers, broadening our volunteer base.

## 2. Program Objectives

There are two main objectives of the Accreditation Program:

- provide a program in which FSILG undergraduate leaders and the AILG (the alumni leaders of MIT FSILG house corporations and advisory boards) may actively exchange ideas to improve the FSILG community and support its members by operating the Accreditation Program as peers; and
- provide the MIT administration with a multidimensional evaluation of the overall health of each MIT organization that qualifies as a FSILG.

## 3. Review Approach

3.1. Preparation. The reviews held during the 2012-13 academic year followed an approach that began with a prototype eight years ago and has been operational for over five years. The approach consists of peer reviews by Visiting Committees sent to evaluate the health of each organization in the areas of Governance and Oversight, Financial Condition and Planning, Recruitment and Retention, Member Development and Values, Scholarship and Behavior, and the condition of the Physical Plant. An important difference between this program and other programs that we are aware of elsewhere is our focus on the evaluation of the owners, the alumni organizations, and their effectiveness in both operational and social involvement with their undergraduate organizations. The majority of FSILG real estate, worth over \$100 million, is owned by MIT alumni groups, and over 200 alumni are actively involved in the operation of the FSILGs. The Accreditation program is an important part of protecting and upgrading that significant investment.

After some proof-of-concept reviews during the years from 1999-2003, the first major trial of the program took place in the 2004-05 academic year. Two FSILGs were reviewed using a question-and-response approach that required several site visits. The scope of the review questionnaire was developed for these reviews. The visit schedule was thought to be overly time-consuming to apply to the entire FSILG community, even on a two-year rotating basis, so visits were limited to about two hours per house in the 2005-06 academic year. The questionnaire was tightened, with fewer long-format answers, to reduce the effort to complete to about eight hours and to limit reviews to two hours. Seven more living groups were reviewed. For the 2006-07 academic year, the questionnaire was recast so that responses could be provided in spreadsheet form but was otherwise unchanged. The visits were shortened to 90 minutes, but feedback from Visiting

Committees during Spring 2008 resulted in returning to two hour visits for academic years from 2008-09 onward.

The Accreditation Committee uses three websites. Within the AILG web structure, our site contains information on review dates, previous reports, and status updates (including handouts from various plenaries). There are also links to a second operational website maintained by the Accreditation and to the website for the Basic Data Form. The addresses of these websites are provided in Section 7 of this report (References). As in the previous year, the operational site was used to post current schedules, status, results, and active documents. The BDF is accessed as an online form with item-by-item instructions, allowing members of the FSILG to work as a team to update the data and, when completed, notify the Accreditation Coordinator. It is constructed as a script permitting continual minor updates to the questions as suggestions are received throughout the year. Organizations are able to import their answers from prior reviews into the current form, which merges the data, even where new questions have been added to the form.

Three to four weeks in advance of the review, reminders are sent to each living group asking each to complete the questionnaire no later than two weeks before the scheduled visit. We emphasize that Alumni and Undergraduates are expected to work together to complete the questionnaire. The online system allows the partially completed document to be saved by the person working on it. Once the FSILG has completed work on the online questionnaire, they notify the Accreditation Coordinator, who makes PDF copies and distributes these to the members of the Visiting Committee. The saved form is continually available to the FSILG to help start the next review, typically two years later. The design allows information from identical questions to carry forward and tabular information to flow to previous years, even after changes are made to the form to add or delete questions.

Each Visiting Committee consists of three or four AILG volunteers. We request that each FSILG provide at least three members of the house corporation or advisory team (and preferably more) and at least three active undergraduate members of the living group (and preferably more for a learning experience) to discuss and clarify the responses. The undergraduate members present are usually the officers—president, house manager, or treasurer. The questionnaire responses are distributed to the reviewers before the review in most cases. While we had improvement over previous years, there were a few FSILGs whose work on the form was still incomplete on the day before the review. These were distributed and used along with additional data acquired at the review.

3.2. Timetable. Eight Saturdays, one in October and December and two in November, March, and April, were selected for reviews. In addition, one Sunday evening in April was selected to accommodate the religious beliefs of two of our member organizations. One to six reviews were held on each Saturday with one or two Visiting Committees each conducting one or two reviews, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. We successfully completed 23 of our planned reviews, but due to the serious campus and citywide crisis two days before our final review date, 6 reviews were deferred into the next academic year.

We began each review day with a 30-45 minute meeting over a full hot breakfast where we briefed each of the Visiting Committees about the schedule and to discuss review procedures to maintain uniformity. Breakfast was available at 8:00 AM and we began discussions at 8:15 AM with all reviewers. The first review of the day started at 9:00 AM. After each two hour review, an hour was scheduled for the group to organize notes and complete a first draft of their report. Lunch was available as early as 11:00 AM during the discussion, with a formal lunch break from 12:00 noon until 1:00 PM. If a Visiting Committee only had a single review, the Visiting Committee left after lunch. Otherwise, a second review was conducted from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. After the review, as in the morning, an hour was scheduled for work on the draft report. Soft drinks or juices and snacks were provided as an afternoon refreshment. We asked Visiting Committees to submit their reports within one to two weeks of their visits.

We believe that having a dedicated room reserved on campus for each review day to serve as a base of operations and a place where the initial drafts could be completed makes for a much more organized and productive day and contributes to significantly more rapid report completion.

In the case of the one Sunday evening review, the Visiting Committee met with the Accreditation Coordinator in the early evening for introductions and preparation over dinner. The Visiting Committees then met with the alumni/ae and students of the two organizations. The reviews concluded at 8:30 PM after which soft drinks, juices, and snacks were available during the initial drafting of the report.

3.3. Resources and Budget. In aggregate, alumni involved in this program donate an estimated 900 hours per academic year to keep the program running smoothly. Each of our 34 reviewers (whose names appear under “Acknowledgments”) contributed four to eight hours of time during one day of reviews. More than a third of these were scheduled for two or more out of the six Saturdays and one Sunday (and in some cases represented their own organization on the other side of the table on some other Saturday), but due to the cancellation of the final Saturday only one fourth actually served more than one Saturday. Four to six additional hours were spent examining the questionnaire responses prior to the review and completing the reports for each living group. As a result, individual reviewers spent between 10 and 30 hours on accreditation. In addition, for each of the five reviews in which the reviewers expressed reservations, the AILG board spent three to six person-hours reviewing, making changes to, and approving each report.

Based on what was learned about this in previous years, at the end of the 2006-7 year, the previous Accreditation Chair, Herman Marshall, submitted a proposal to provide some paid assistance to the volunteers. The proposal was implemented with some modifications, and the current model provides a budget for a paid Accreditation Coordinator plus breakfast, lunch, and afternoon refreshments for the volunteer visitors and minor incidentals, such as taxis between campus and the FSILGs, when needed.

This year's program continued with what appears now to be a successful steady-state operation. We operate with a volunteer Accreditation Committee consisting of five alumni volunteers including Chairman David Hutchings (who has retired at the end of this year to pursue an

advanced degree in Canada), David Burmaster, Bob Ferrara, Herman Marshall (who will again serve as Chairman during the next academic year), and Ernie Sabine. Regular meetings of the committee were held approximately monthly and were attended by a representative from the MIT FSILG Office, Marlena Love, and John Covert, who continued in the position of Accreditation Coordinator after joining the program as a volunteer during its trial years. John spent approximately 200 hours recruiting volunteers (with significant help from David Burmaster identifying and making the first contact with potential new volunteers), collecting and distributing materials, organizing the review schedules and meals for the Visiting Committees, documenting policies and procedures, and reporting to the Accreditation Committee, AILG Board, and MIT. During the reviews conducted in the 2012-13 academic year, we spent \$1,562 on meals, \$293 on transportation, and \$400 on printing and supplies, which is about \$322 per review Saturday. The program has contracted with FCI for archival of encrypted data and other miscellaneous services such as arranging meals.

3.4. Execution. A review sheet for use by reviewers developed in the 2006-07 year continued to be used with minor modifications. The four basic parts of the review sheet, which also became the main sections of the completed reviews, were:

*Overall finding.* As in previous years, there are three possible findings resulting from the review. The Visiting Committee can (1) recommend accreditation, (2) recommend accreditation with reservations, or (3) not recommend that the living group be accredited. The Visiting Committee should explain any reservations well enough that officers of the living group can take appropriate action before the next review. The Visiting Committee must enter a detailed explanation if they do not recommend that the living group be accredited. Organizations recommended for accreditation without reservations will be reviewed again in approximately two years. For the other two findings, a revisit is scheduled during the next term. If the finding is "not recommended for accreditation," the Dean of Student Life and the FSILG Office schedule an intervention to help the organization improve before its next review.

*General comments for MIT and AILG members.* In this section, the Visiting Committee lists the best practices, areas needing improvement, and lessons learned. Any items listed here will also be provided to the MIT Dean of Student Life and publicly distributed to the AILG.

*Private comments for the living group.* This section, used sparingly by policy, is for items that are of a more sensitive nature. This section allows the Visiting Committee to make comments that reflect the detailed discussion during the review. These may involve confidential information that was disclosed at the time of the review or in the data provided before the review. Examples are specific suggestions about finances, personnel, or behavior. The degree of privacy afforded to these comments and whether the section should exist at all continues to be a topic of significant discussion within the Accreditation Committee and with the AILG Board. We adopted the following written policy for these comments: (i) we send private comments with the report to the living group, (ii) when the report is filed, the private comments are maintained separately, (iii) in the event of a "recommend accreditation with reservations" or "not recommended" finding, the private comments will be provided to the next Visiting Committee

and the AILG board, (iv) the private comments are not sent to the Dean's office, and (v) the retention period for the private comments is 10 years in the archives.

*Suggestions about the review process.* The reviewers may comment on, or make suggestions about, the review process itself in order that the process may be improved.

3.5. Completion. Report delivery continued to improve over prior years. Eighteen (78 percent) of the reports were sent to the FSILGs within two weeks (six within one week) and only one of the reports took more than five weeks. The Accreditation Coordinator only rarely had to resort to repeated email reminders to members of Visiting Committees. All reports were completed before the end of the academic year, and after necessary approvals by the AILG Board, all reports were forwarded to the Deans by May 1. The policy that either the scribe or the Visiting Committee chair could unilaterally declare a report complete if other committee members were non-responsive did not need to be applied this year; all visitors remained engaged until reports were completed.

As in previous years, the scribe or committee chair (at their option) would send the completed reviews directly to the FSILG house corporation or advisors with a request for their comments to be returned within five business days. Template cover letters for this purpose were supplied to the Visiting Committees. In order to avoid a perpetual cycle of comment-revise-comment-revise the Visiting Committees were not required to revise their reports based on the FSILG comments, but were free to correct any “errors of fact” if the committee agreed with the FSILG that changes were appropriate. Any report that was substantially changed, either through this process or by the AILG Board in the case of adverse findings, was returned for an updated set of comments from the FSILG. This occurred only once.

Those reviews receiving a finding of recommend accreditation (no reservations) together with their response, if any, were forwarded to the Deans by the Accreditation Coordinator shortly after the comment period had expired. Those where the finding included reservations were first sent to the AILG Board for their concurrence with the committee's finding, and, if the Board concurred, sent to the Deans. Our policy is the same for cases where the Visiting Committee did not recommend accreditation, though this did not occur during the 2012-13 academic year. In the event the report needed to be sent back to the Visiting Committee for editing, a new response was requested from the FSILG only if the changes were substantive.

#### 4. Review Results

During academic year 2012-13, we reviewed 22 of the 38 FSILGs which are currently active at MIT. One of these was reviewed both in the Fall and again in the Spring. The year ended with all organizations recommended for accreditation, although in the case of one of these final report included “reservations”. This organization was found to need improvements in areas of recruitment, governance, and alumni involvement; it will be revisited next term. Please see the table at the end of this section for specific detail.

In the case of a finding including reservations, the Visiting Committees listed the reasons for their decision in the findings in their reports (see the Compendium). Written responses to reviews submitted by organizations, if any, are also included immediately after each report. These responses, after removal of anything pertaining to the private comments section of the reports, will be kept with the reports and have been forwarded together with the reviewers' reports to the MIT administration.

MIT volunteers and staff offer assistance to all organizations needing improvement.

Due to the fact that students transition through each residential living group over a 3 year period (sophomore, junior, and senior years), only one-third or less of the students originally present during a review will be present again for a second review two years later. This underscores the need to review every living group every two years as well as the urgency of returning the next term to re-review any organization with a finding including reservations or not recommended.

The table on the next page shows all FSILGs active at MIT during the 2012-13 academic year with the dates and results of the most recent reviews and the planned timeframe for the next review. The names of the 22 FSILGs reviewed during the year are in **bold**. The groups whose planned reviews were delayed into next Fall due to the city and campus crisis are indicated by a dagger. One group's reviews have been deferred until completion of a reorganization. This group is scheduled for a review next Spring.

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Last Review</b>	<b>Result at last review</b>	<b>Next review</b>
<b>Alpha Chi Omega</b>	01-Dec-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Alpha Delta Phi</b>	3-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Alpha Epsilon Phi</b>	18-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Alpha Epsilon Pi</b>	18-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
Alpha Phi	01-Oct-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013
Beta Theta Pi	07-May-2011	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Spring 2014
<b>Chi Phi</b>	05-Mar-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
Delta Kappa Epsilon	05-Nov-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013
<b>Delta Tau Delta</b>	17-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013*
<b>Delta Upsilon</b>	09-Mar-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
<b>Epsilon Theta</b>	1-Dec-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Fenway House</b>	1-Dec-2012	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2013†
<b>Kappa Alpha Theta</b>	12-Feb-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
<b>Kappa Sigma</b>	20-Oct-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Lambda Chi Alpha</b>	17-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Nu Delta</b>	02-Apr-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
Number 6 Club	03-Dec-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013
Phi Beta Epsilon	05-May-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013†
<b>Phi Delta Theta</b>	30-Oct-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
Phi Kappa Sigma	10-Mar-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2014
<b>Phi Kappa Theta</b>	12-Feb-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
<b>Phi Sigma Kappa</b>	03-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>Pi Beta Phi</b>	01-Dec-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
Pi Lambda Phi	05-May-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2014
<b>pika</b>	07-May-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
<b>Sigma Alpha Epsilon</b>	09-Mar-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
Sigma Chi	05-May-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2014
<b>Sigma Kappa</b>	12-Feb-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
Sigma Nu	28-Apr-2012	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2013†
Sigma Phi Epsilon	28-Apr-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013†
Student House	10-Mar-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2014
Tau Epsilon Phi	05-May-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013†
Theta Chi	10-Mar-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2014
Theta Delta Chi	28-Apr-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2014
<b>Theta Xi</b>	17-Nov-2012	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2014
<b>WILG</b>	05-Mar-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2015
Zeta Beta Tau	02-Apr-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013†
Zeta Psi	05-Nov-2011	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2013

## 5. Areas of Accreditation that Need Improvement and Other Plans for Next Year

While we believe we have a successful operational model which does not require major changes, carefully considered changes will continue to improve the program. Part of the process for developing improvements involves requesting suggestions from every Visiting Committee. The Accreditation Committee has reviewed all suggestions received during Academic Year 2012-13

and has incorporated many of the suggestions, including such things as wording changes in the Basic Data Form. In this section we highlight first those areas where we are considering implementation of changes for next year and then discuss plans for next year and some areas where progress has been made but continued diligence is required.

### 5.1. Areas of Focus for Next Year

*Expanded Volunteer Base.* While we have a large enough volunteer pool that volunteer burnout is being avoided and we have increased the participation by women FSILG alumnae, we still need more participation by women. Some volunteers serve for only one or two years before moving out of the area, and new volunteers are always needed to replace them. In addition, our 34 Visiting Committee members this year were drawn from only 21 of our 38 organizations – only slightly more than half. As soon as practical, we want to expand the pool of volunteers to include at least one alumnus or alumna from each AILG member. The committee strongly believes that this is not only necessary to avoid volunteer burnout but will also allow greater opportunity for sharing of ideas and successes amongst AILG members to enhance FSILG standards for both those representatives on the Visiting Committees and those organizations being reviewed. Potential volunteers are asked to contact the Accreditation Coordinator or any member of the Accreditation Committee.

*Facilities Issues.* An area of repeated concern from Visiting Committees relates to facilities management. The Accreditation Committee has been working with the Facilities Committee and the Building Safety Facilitator to identify ways to allow for a better method of keeping track of facilities issues. As part of that, in addition to a telephone call to the Assistant Dean and Director of FSILGs by the Visiting Committee Chairs before the review for a sense of behavioral issues at the FSILG, Visiting Committee Chairs also call the Building Safety Facilitator for a sense of any pressing facilities issues that may not be reported in the BDF. Although, the committee planned to make available a snapshot of the Safety, Licensing, and Inspection (SLI) “dashboard” to Visiting Committee Chairs before their visit, logistical issues prevented that this year. These issues appear to have been recently solved and we expect to begin doing so beginning with the November 2013 reviews. The SLI dashboard provides a quick overview of the status of licensing and inspection documents that are on file with the FSILG Cooperative Inc (FCI) and, we believe, will provide a valuable tool for assessing facilities at our member organizations. Our goal is to ensure this becomes institutionalized to better address and diagnose facilities issues at FSILGs.

*Assessment of Accreditation Program.* While we believe the Accreditation Program is one of the AILG's premiere programs, and has been recognized both at national fraternal events and by the MIT Alumni Association, it is important to continually assess our progress against our stated objectives. This is especially important in the near-term as the AILG and entire FSILG community is rallying around the FSILG Strategic Plan that was composed over the 2011-12 academic year, and has been endorsed in whole or in part by all major stakeholders, including both undergraduate and alumni leadership. As the FSILG community takes stock of its current programs and initiatives, and how they align with the strategic plan and their original objectives, it is appropriate that the Accreditation Program do the same.

## 5.2. Plans and Continued Areas of Focus

*Uniform Evaluation Criteria.* The committee has wrestled with the tension between subjective and objective evaluation since the inception of the program. In general, we believe that bright-line tests for overall findings (e.g. the presence of “x” necessitates a finding of not recommend) are inappropriate and blunt tools to provide the necessary guidance for our member groups to improve, and for the MIT administration to have an accurate picture of FSILG life. Instead, we have generally relied on institutional knowledge, by having at least half of the membership of each Visiting Committee be experienced volunteers, and oversight by the AILG Board for adverse finding, to ensure continuity. However, over time we have developed certain specific items that, depending on their severity, should give rise to “reservations” or an inability to recommend accreditation. The first of these which we codified was failure to have submitted the IRS Form 990s. Even though it might seem that this is a simple “yes or no,” one of the first committees to have to consider this particular metric pointed out that an organization might have a long history of doing this correctly, may have just missed a single year, and may already have plans in place to file as soon as possible.

*Schedule.* To continue with our two year planned review cycle and our next term revisitation schedule, and partly because of the 6 deferred reviews due to the mid-April citywide and campus crisis, we must review 18 organizations during the 2013-14 academic year.

Our schedule for next year has us reviewing 11 FSILGs during the Fall Term. During the Spring Term we have planned reviews at 7 FSILGs, plus any revisits in the Spring Term required as a result of findings returned from the Fall Term reviews.

## 6. Acknowledgments

We extend our warmest thanks to all the volunteers who have participated in this program. We thank the house corporation members and undergraduates who, in the process of being reviewed, have put many hours into preparing data and in contributing to the future success of MIT's FSILG community. We especially thank the Visiting Committee members who participated in the reviews and helped write the reports during this period: Ryan Andrews, Steve Baker, David Burmaster, Eric Cigan, Dan Dunn, Caroline Fernandes, Bob Ferrara, Mike Gerhardt, Melissa Hansel, David Hutchings, Jim Janosky, Keith Kallberg, Anya Kattaf, Jessica Kesner, Jim Latimer, Clifton Leigh, Alice Leung, LeAnn Lindsey, Herman Marshall, Buddy Michini, Akil Middleton, Jason Mondanaro, Kevin Moore, Herb Mower, Vic Rhoads, Roy Russell, Ernie Sabine, Mark Spadafora, Tim Stumbaugh, Andrew Sudbury, Dan Taub, Jim Wagner, Rick Winterson, and Yumi Yasutake. We also thank two additional volunteers, Michael Howard and Steve Summit, who prepared for reviews which were postponed until the next academic year due to city and campus events. And we thank all the participants in previous years who helped to develop a successful, working program.

A great deal of thanks is also due to the MIT staff in the office of the Dean of Student Life who supported this program, especially Deans Marlana Love, Henry Humphreys, and Chris Colombo, whose support of this program has helped greatly to ensure its success.

## 7. References

AILG Historical Website, accreditation main page (past documents):

[ailg.mit.edu/committees/ailg-accreditation-program/](http://ailg.mit.edu/committees/ailg-accreditation-program/)

Accreditation Coordinator's operational website (current documents, results, and policies):

[web.mit.edu/ailg/ailgreviews/](http://web.mit.edu/ailg/ailgreviews/)

Basic Data Form (sample form accessible to all and password-protected access for FSILGs):

[ailg.scripts.mit.edu/bdf/](http://ailg.scripts.mit.edu/bdf/)

## Appendix A: Best Practices in the MIT FSILG Community

Over 150 "best practices" were identified in the 2012-13 accreditation reviews. Many are of general nature and are listed here. All of the best practices are contained in the full reports in the Compendium, available to any member of the MIT AILG community. Some are particularly cited from year to year and are denoted with a star (\*). For more information about any particular item, please contact the Accreditation Coordinator or any member of the Accreditation Committee.

### Governance and Oversight

1. The living group has an officer that runs retreats and critiques house meeting process.
2. \* There is a higher minimum GPA for officers than for other members.
3. \* Officers are required to update the house wiki, which includes information such as how to find UROP projects.
4. \* Various officers have assistant positions that encourage smoother transitions. These are often new members.

### Scholarship

5. \* Scholarship is recognized with awards or points that can be redeemed for school supplies.
6. \* Google Docs are used to record comments from upperclassmen for MIT classes.
7. Upperclass TAs hold office hours or classes in the living group's residence.

### Member Development

8. Stricter adherence to the organization's stated values improves involvement by members and support of alumni.
9. The group hosts a dinner attended by 5-6 faculty members.

### Alumni Programming

10. The living group profiles a local alumnus each week for the membership.
11. Undergraduates maintain topical e-mail lists for discussion with alumni in areas such as entrepreneurship, politics, or casual issues.

### Financial and Physical Plant

12. \* The Alumni and/or undergraduate organizations use a CPA to handle tax documentation.
13. Recycling was implemented effectively and reduced trash removal expenses.
14. \* Summer housebills are collected up front.

### Recruitment and Retention

15. \* Living group housing is well-maintained, resulting in a strong interest to move in after freshman year.

### Risk Management

16. The group regularly invites neighbors to events at the residence.
17. Summer boarders are found via a strong relationship to an MIT department that hosts summer students.
18. The house is dry and drug-free, with rare special (closed) events that utilize a bar service.

## Appendix B: Areas of the MIT FSILG Community Needing Improvement

As with Best Practices, over 100 areas needing improvement were identified in accreditation reviews. Here, we highlight the most commonly cited areas that need improvement and indicate how commonly the area has been highlighted over the past seven years, using a number in parentheses. The reports in the Compendium contain all of the specific results reported by the committees.

1. (4) For 14 groups, the Alumni board or advisory group is too small, limited, or does not support the chapter sufficiently.
2. (4) For 7 groups, there are issues concerning the tax status or filing of 990 forms.
3. (3) For 7 groups, the officer transition process is inadequate, needs to be documented, or involve more of the new members.
4. (4) for 7 groups, recruitment is too low or retention is a problem.
5. (2) For 6 groups, the alumni need to develop a capital plan.
6. (3) For 4 groups, AILG involvement is negligible, limiting access to a broad community with common interests.
7. (5) Four groups need to improve Risk Management policy and enforce it.
8. (0) Four groups were found to have difficulties working with or managing the RA.
9. (4) Three groups were encouraged to recruit a faculty advisor.
10. (2) Three groups were specifically cited for inadequate scholarship programming.
11. (3) Three groups were encouraged to recruit a Chapter Alumnus Risk Management Advisor (CARMA).
12. (3) Three groups need to set housebills higher or in a more stable, manageable fashion.
13. (4) Three groups still have difficulties with unpaid bills or may not be using graduation and registration holds to ensure bill collection.
14. (3) Three groups were cited for poorly maintained or cluttered facilities.
15. (1) Two groups need to improve expectations for member behavior such as developing a contract or checklist.
16. Two groups need to improve connections between alumni and members.

## **Appendix C**

### **Compendium: FSILG Review Reports**

In the “full version” of this report, the accreditation reviews as well as the responses from the reviewed organizations appear after this introductory page. They are organized in alphabetical order by organization.

Because it is the policy of the Accreditation Committee to share the full reports only within the MIT AILG community, posted versions and other widely circulated copies of the summary report do not include the individual reviews. Any member of the MIT AILG community may obtain copies of any or all of the reports by contacting the Accreditation Coordinator or the FSILG Cooperative. Members will be provided copies of the reports for their own organizations in electronic form. Other reports or the entire Compendium will be printed and mailed upon request.