

MIT FSILG ACCREDITATION

Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee Academic Year 2014-15

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Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee Academic Year 2014-15

Abstract

A total of 27 reviews at 25 different FSILGs were conducted this academic year, for a somewhat larger than average workload. The year ended with all organizations recommended for accreditation, although in four cases the Visiting Committee expressed “reservations.” These organizations were found to need improvements in areas of governance, oversight, and recruitment. The assistance of experienced alumni volunteers (“reservation trackers”) and MIT staff is being offered to all organizations found to be needing improvement. Five organizations recommended for accreditation were invited for a one-year review. In three cases the visiting committees wished to ensure recent improvements in internal programs and processes are successful and well-implemented, and in the other two cases, the FSILG office has requested an early review to address risk management issues observed by MIT Staff.

We summarized common Best Practices and Areas Needing Improvement at a Plenary meeting of the AILG. That summary was posted on the AILG Accreditation web page. The committee continues to recruit new volunteers to be reviewers but the Accreditation Committee itself would benefit from new members. We deployed a rubric to provide uniform standards by which living groups are reviewed. The accreditation coordinator implemented an online survey system allowing both visitors and organizational members to assign objective rankings based on individual living group characteristics, accomplishments, and capabilities. The survey was developed over the past two years with help from the Division of Student Life, and was deployed for all but the first 4 of the 27 reviews conducted this year. The committee is studying the results to determine what adjustments should be made to the rubric and how to use it in routine reviews.

Overview

The program has been under development for the past decade and has evolved considerably over that time. This was the eighth 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.

The Spring reviews included second reviews for two of the organizations reviewed in the Fall. The year ended with all organizations recommended for accreditation, although in four cases the Visiting Committee expressed “reservations.” These organizations were found to need improvements in areas of governance, oversight, and recruitment. The assistance of experienced volunteers and MIT staff is being offered to all organizations found to be needing improvement. Three organizations will be revisited during Fall 2015. Because of the nature of the reservation for one of these, the visiting committee recommended waiting until Spring 2016 before returning. Five organizations recommended for accreditation were invited for a one-year review. In three cases the visiting committees wished to ensure recent improvements in internal programs and processes are successful and well-implemented, and in the other two cases, the FSILG office has requested an early review to address risk management issues observed by MIT Staff. MIT Staff also requested a review one semester early for an organization reviewed in Spring of 2014. 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 2014-15 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 2014-15 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 27 reviews run in the 2014-15 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. Challenges and New Features of the 2014-15 Academic Year

The 2014-15 academic year was a busy one for the Accreditation Program, and included two major highlights that deserve special mention in this report. First is a new system for calculating objective metrics in each of the areas of interest using a “Rubric” questionnaire filled out by both the reviewers and the organization immediately following the visit. Second is our progress at recruiting new volunteers, including several from organizations that had never before or not recently provided volunteers.

1.1. Metrics

The committee deployed a rubric to provide uniform standards by which living groups are reviewed. The accreditation coordinator implemented an online survey system allowing both visitors and organizational members to assign objective rankings based on individual living group characteristics, accomplishments, and capabilities. Immediately after the visit is completed, the survey is filled out by the review team members and by the living group attendees who evaluate statements covering a wide range of areas ranking each from 1-4. The survey was developing over the past two years with help from the Division of Student Life, and was deployed for all but the first 4 of the 27 reviews conducted this year. The committee has been studying the results to determine what adjustments should be made prior to the beginning of the 2015-16 academic year.

1.2. Reservation Tracker

This year, we also implemented a plan to assign a “reservation tracker” to each living group which has an Accreditation Review that recommends accreditation but with reservations. The objective is to provide a liaison between such living groups and the Accreditation Committee. The liaison receives monthly reports from the living group regarding the status of reservations and forwards these to the Committee to ensure that there is progress before the next review. If the living group is having trouble clearing a particular reservation, the liaison may recommend that they find help from an appropriate group such as the FSILG office, the Accreditation Coordinator, or a tax consultant. The plan is still under evaluation but has proven worthwhile in a few cases.

1.3. Increased Participation of FSILGs in Visiting Committees.

The Accreditation Committee has a stated goal to have each and every FSILG provide at least one member to serve on a Visiting Committee. Our intent is 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. We currently have at least one volunteer from 26 of our 39 living groups, and were able to recruit two new alumni/ae volunteers from one organization which had previously never provided a volunteer. Volunteers from two organization which had previously provided volunteers left the area or had job responsibilities change preventing these organizations from providing any volunteers to the Accreditation Coordinator. We will always need to continue working toward broadening our volunteer base as we recruit new volunteers.

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 2014-15 academic year followed an approach that began with a prototype ten years ago and has been operational for eight 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 Coordinator 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 checked-in by one person working on it and checked-out by the next. 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. This year we continued to have good on-time completion of the Basic Data Form, with almost all FSILGs submitting the form at least four days before the review.

3.2. Timetable.

Six Saturdays, one in October, two in November, one in March, and two April, were selected for reviews. In addition, to accommodate the religious schedules of the two predominantly Jewish groups, a Sunday evening review date was scheduled. Two to six reviews were held on each day with one, two, or three Visiting Committees each conducting one or two reviews, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. We successfully completed all 27 of our planned reviews.

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. In the case of the Sunday evening reviews, two teams met at 5pm over a catered dinner to prepare, conducted one review from 6-8pm each, and then remained to develop their first drafts. We asked Visiting Committees to submit their reports within one to two weeks of their visits.

We have found 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.

3.3. Resources and Budget.

In aggregate, alumni involved in this program donate an estimated 900 hours per academic year on average to keep the program running smoothly. Each of our 41 reviewers (whose names appear under “Acknowledgments”) contributed four to eight hours of time during one day of reviews. About one-fourth of these reviewers were scheduled for two of the five Saturdays, but this year, for the second time, no reviewer was asked to serve more than once during a single semester. In addition to the Saturday volunteer time, each reviewer spent four to six additional hours 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 six reviews in which the reviewers expressed reservations, the AILG board spent three to six person-hours reviewing, making changes to, and approving each report.

In addition to the volunteer time, and to encourage volunteers to complete work in a timely fashion, the Accreditation Chair for the 2006-7 academic year, 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 three alumni volunteers including Chairman Herman Marshall, David Burmaster, and Ernie Sabine. Regular meetings of the committee were held approximately monthly and were attended by representatives from the MIT FSILG Office, Bob Ferrara and Jacob Oppenheimer, 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 240 hours at an agreed rate of \$55/hour recruiting 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 2014-15 academic year, we spent \$2154 on meals, \$288 on transportation, and \$205 on supplies, which, including the accreditation coordinator's charges is about \$587 per review. The program has contracted with FCI for archival of encrypted data and other miscellaneous services.

3.4. Mechanisms.

The new BDF system developed three years ago continues to make preparation for reviews easier for both organizations and reviewers. Since our process involves a two-year cycle, all of our organizations are now using this new system. 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. For next year we plan an enhancement to allow organizations to flag which responses have been reviewed for final correctness as the form is worked on by different individuals.

3.5. 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.

3.6. Completion.

Report delivery increased significantly over prior years, with 70% (19) of the 27 reports sent to

the FSILGs within two weeks, 37% within one week, 93% sent within three weeks, and only two reports taking longer. Each of those took 24 days. The mean time to complete was 10.6 days, and the median was 10 days. This may have been partially the result of a completely automated email reminder system the Accreditation Coordinator had put in place which sent messages to the members of any Visiting Committee which was not regularly communicating on their progress. All reports were completed before the end of the academic year, with all reports forwarded to the Deans by 31 May. 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. The policy that any report that was substantially changed, either through this process or by the AILG Board in the case of adverse findings, would be returned for an updated set of comments from the FSILG, did not need to be applied this year. Due to style reviews by the Accreditation Coordinator prior to submission to the Board for reviews with “reservations”, this was avoided, with the Accreditation Coordinator only recommending style and organization changes to one team.

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 2014-15 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. This, too, did not occur this year.

4. Review Results

During academic year 2014-15, we reviewed 27 of the 39 FSILGs which are currently active at MIT. Two of these were reviewed both in the Fall and again in the Spring. The year ended with all organizations recommended for accreditation, although in the case of four of these final reports included “reservations”. These organizations were found to need improvements in areas of recruitment, governance, and alumni involvement; three will be revisited next term, and because of the time expected for administrative paperwork to resolve the reservation for one of these, the revisit will not take place until the Spring. 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 2014-15 academic year with the dates and results of the most recent reviews and the planned timeframe for the next review. The names of the 25 FSILGs reviewed during the year are in **bold**.

Group Name	Last Review	Result at last review	Next review
Alpha Chi Omega	4-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
Alpha Delta Phi	25-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015*
Alpha Epsilon Phi	2-Nov-2014	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2015+
Alpha Epsilon Pi	2-Nov-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015*
Alpha Phi	16-Nov-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015
Beta Theta Pi	11-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Spring 2016+
Chi Phi	11-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Delta Kappa Epsilon	7-Mar-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2016*
Delta Tau Delta	25-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2015
Epsilon Theta	4-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
Fenway House	15-Nov-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015*
Kappa Alpha Theta	11-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Kappa Sigma	25-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
Nu Delta	11-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Number 6 Club	7-Mar-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2016*
Phi Beta Epsilon	23-Nov-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015
Phi Delta Theta	4-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
Phi Kappa Sigma	8-Mar-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2016
Phi Kappa Theta	7-Mar-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Phi Sigma Kappa	25-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
Pi Beta Phi	25-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
Pi Lambda Phi	5-Apr-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2016
pika	7-Mar-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Sigma Alpha Epsilon	9-Mar-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Sigma Chi	6-Apr-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2016
Sigma Kappa	25-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Sigma Nu	11-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2015
Sigma Phi Epsilon	16-Nov-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015
Student House	11-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017
Tau Epsilon Phi	23-Nov-2013	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015
Theta Chi	5-Apr-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2016
Theta Delta Chi	5-Apr-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2015*
Theta Xi	4-Oct-2014	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2016
WILG	25-Apr-2015	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2017

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 2014-15 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.

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 continue to prevent this. While 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), we do not currently believe that it is providing any more value than provided by the conversation with the BSF in assessing facilities at our member organizations. We will ask the Facilities Committee to make the dashboard more useful and accessible for accreditation.

For next year, we plan to continue using the rubric survey to supply metrics in various areas examined by our review teams. We have surveyed a bit more than half of all the existing living groups and should obtain a complete set of surveys. Meanwhile, we plan to offer the survey to the FSILG office as well, in order to prepare review teams for their reviews. Furthermore, adding the views of the FSILG office will help review teams make sure that they have conducted a complete review, without missing areas of concern. During the upcoming academic year, we will consider various ways to analyze and present the data to the AILG, ensuring anonymity by aggregating data. At some point, the data may be used during reviews to help living groups understand how well they perform in each of the areas considered in the reviews.

To continue with our two year planned review cycle and our next term revisitation schedule, we must review 20 of our 39 organizations during the 2015-16 academic year. Our schedule for next year has us reviewing 13 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 all of our organizations for their participation in and support of this program, especially 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: Reid Allen, Bryan Owens Bryson, Dave Burmaster, Eric Cigan, Mike Feinstein, Aimee Forsythe, Mike Gerhardt, Michael Howard, Kim Hunter, David Hutchings, Jim Janosky, Keith Kallberg, Anya Kattf, Jessica Kesner, Hauke Kite-Powell, Jim Latimer, Clifton Leigh, Alice Leung, LeAnn Lindsey, Herman Marshall, Akil Middleton, Jason Mondanaro, Kevin Moore, Anne Morelli, Herb Mower, Nick Pellegrino, Lou Perna, Matt Pires, Vic Rhoads, Maria Robinson, Roy Russell, Ernie Sabine, Dan Smythe, Mark Spadafora, Cecilia Stuopis, Steve Summit, Dan Taub, Emily Wood, Stan Wulf, Yumi Yasutake,

and Amy Yu. We also thank the volunteers, who, although not scheduled for a review this year, remained in communication with the Accreditation Coordinator about their availability and continued interest in future involvement. These include Steve Baker, Dan Dunn, Melissa Hansel, and Jim Wagner. 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 Bob Ferrara, Henry Humphreys, and Chris Colombo, and staff member Jacob Oppenheimer, 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/

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

web.mit.edu/ailg/ailgreviews/

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

ailg.scripts.mit.edu/bdf/

Appendix A: Best Practices in the MIT FSILG Community

Over 150 "best practices" were identified in the 2014-15 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. Undergraduate officers regularly participate in house corporation meetings.
2. Officers examine and update job descriptions and transition plans, sometimes at a retreat.
3. Attending AILG accreditation reviews provides insights for officers in training.
4. The living group provides explicit opportunity to review traditions and the group meeting process.
5. House tasks are subdivided sufficiently to avoid overwhelming individuals.
6. Asana is a useful on-line task management system that can help keep track of tasks for both alumni and undergraduates.

Scholarship

1. Financial scholarships are offered for in-house tutoring, supporting the education of other members.

Member Development

1. For a group with more members than can be housed, a class-year based quota system can maintain balance and good connectivity between members.
2. Students are paired with alumni for guidance on career and life issues.
3. Involvement in group functions and leadership is encouraged through rewards such as priority in picking rooms.
4. Membership is increasing awareness of mental health within the living group.

Alumni Programming

1. Alumni support chapter by reviewing resumes.

2. Alumni can support recruitment "behind the scenes", leaving actives to engage prospective members more thoroughly.
3. Regional alumni events, including retreats, and using social media such as FaceBook or
4. Twitter can keep alumni informed and engaged.
5. Alumni are involved in member development with informal house visits, formal one-on-one consultation, and group talks.

Financial and Physical Plant

1. Capital campaigns are conducted to renovate premises.
2. Non-resident members are charged an appropriate fee.
3. The group sets aside 20% of the budget for capital expenditures in order to keep up the facility.
4. Distributing individual debt to the rest of the membership can yield a high payback rate due to social pressure.
5. Cloud-based bookkeeping provides good access to records and doesn't require backup.
6. Recurring alumni donations can be arranged through PayPal, even if in small amounts.

Recruitment and Retention

1. Pre-orientation programs increases living group visibility and improves potential for recruitment.
2. Communication with parents can facilitate recruitment and improve retention.
3. "Bring a friend" events can bring in a few new members as sophomores.

Risk Management

1. Every member is trained in risk management according to council or organization expectations (e.g. party-safe training).
2. Members are encouraged to live in the house over the summer, improving the ratio of boarders to members.
3. A "coat check" can be used to check guests for outside alcohol.
4. Member "sponsors" of summer boarders can help reduce summer risk and improve rent collection.

Community Development

1. The group helps with community service and or philanthropic events organized by other living groups.

Appendix B: Areas of the MIT FSILG Community Needing Improvement

Again, many areas needing improvement were flagged in this year's reviews. Common and new issues are listed here.

Governance & Oversight

1. Restarting a chapter requires better records of processes before heritage is lost. A strong national organization can be very helpful here.

Scholarship

1. Academic awareness within membership should improve so that members can receive needed assistance.
2. There are still many groups that are still looking for a Faculty Advisor.

Member Development

1. Retreats should be used more for examining operations and less for partying.
2. Housing contracts are not implemented by some groups and are especially important for summer boarders.

Alumni Programming

1. More alumni should attend accreditation reviews and volunteer to review other FSILGs.
2. Living group anniversaries are excellent opportunities to increase alumni participation in advisory boards and in the house corporation.
3. Boards with low membership are subject to individual burnout as a small number of alumni handle most of the work.

Financial and Physical Plant

1. Some chapters still have little equity in their residences due to original lease agreements, so alumni don't contribute much.
2. There are still groups struggling to maintain membership and avoid the attendant financial risk.

Recruitment and Retention

1. Informal recruitment methods are usually insufficient to maintain or grow membership.

2. Retention is still an issue for many chapters that do not use a year-round recruitment model and do not emphasize moving into the house.

Risk Management

1. Non-member summer boarders still pose significant risk, requiring more oversight by live-in members and local alumni.
2. Some groups do not have an independent judicial board for dealing with sensitive issues that can distract officers.

Community Development

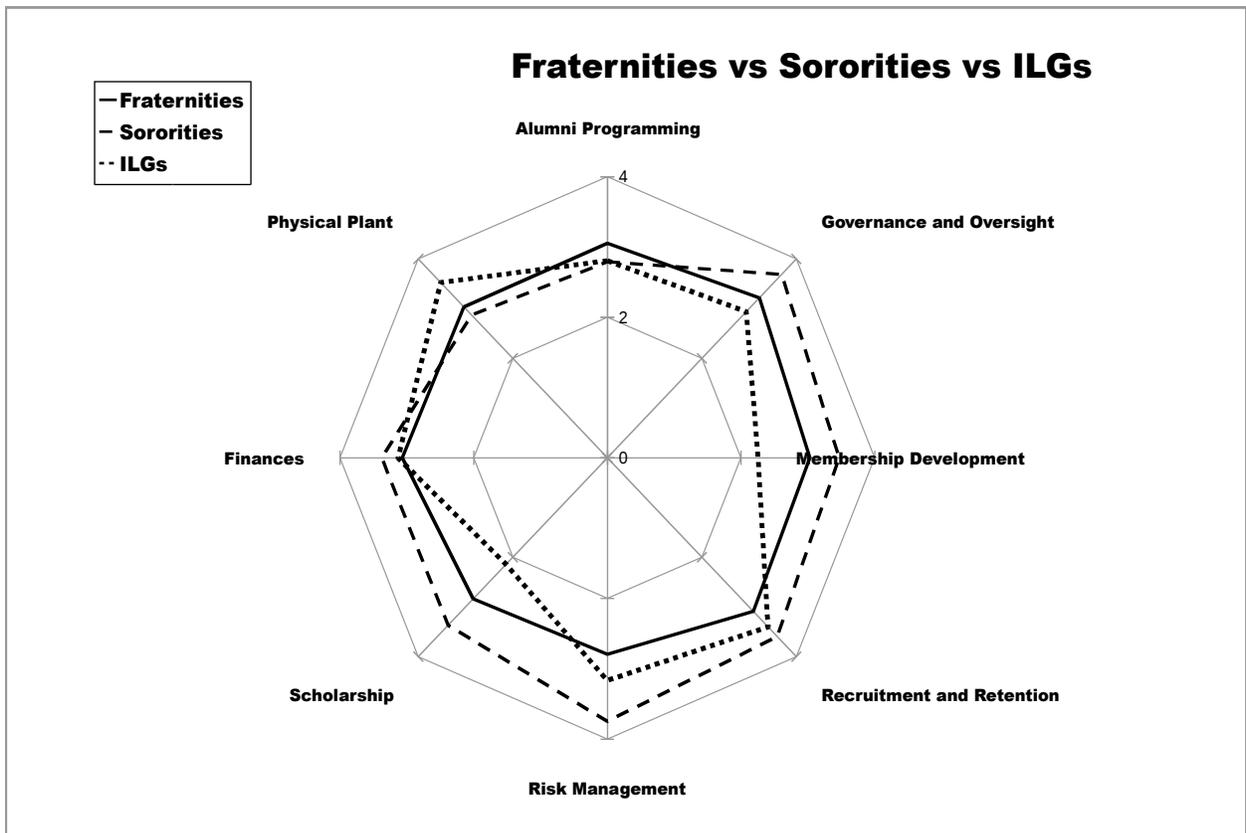
1. Pictures posted to the group web site and other public areas should be removed or cleaned up to avoid the appearance of underage drinking and poor self-control.

Appendix C: Accreditation Rubric

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Alumni Programming	No representative at AILG meetings	No volunteers for accreditation visiting committees	Applies for Weedon award	Wins Weedon award
	Only 1 alumnus at accreditation reviews	1-2 attendees at AILG plenary meetings	Has annual events for alumni	Over 50 alumni at annual events
	BDF submission is over 8 days late	Few alumni are involved on a regular basis	uses Webex, on-line meeting tools	Has programs that integrate young alumni into the house corporation activities
	Alumni or Advisory board has only 2-3 active members	Publishes a newsletter	Participates in Alumni Association programs	More than 3 meetings at residence per year
	No newsletter	Infrequent participation in accreditation reviews	Publishes two or more newsletters per year	Has rep on AILG Board
		BDF submission is over 5 days late	Alumni meet at least once at residence	Profiles local alumni for membership regularly
			Maintains topical e-mail lists	
Governance and Oversight	Lacks officer transition meetings and documentation	Poor documentation of officer transitions.	Officers maintain house wiki	Officers have assistants, often new members
	Alumni board and house officers do not communicate	Poor or infrequent communication between Alumni board and house officers	Appoints active summer officers	Officers have a higher minimum GPA
	Alumni board meets less than twice per term		Group has an advisory board separate from a house corporation	Officers communicate to members weekly
			Alumni officers work with house officers	Community service events receive significant publicity
				Works consistently with other FSILGs
Membership Development	Has no written New Member plan	Involved in only one community service project per year	Declares values and adheres to them	Most members have attended MIT or National leadership seminars
	Involved in no community service projects	Has New Member plan but unreviewed by MIT	Hosts dinner with faculty members	House and alumni have mentor program
	Less than 25% of members are involved in other campus organizations	New members review group values	Most officers have attended MIT or National leadership seminars	Members are encouraged to join 2 or more extracurricular activities
	No review of values	Officers rarely attend leadership seminars		
Recruitment and Retention	House is cluttered, has egress violations	House is chronically below desired occupancy	House is well maintained	All recruits become full members
	More than 10% students leave membership program in a year	One or two members do not move into the house (if applicable)	Recruits are frequently polled about needs and benefits	All members live in house (if applicable)
	House is at less than 60% of full occupancy	Pledge program is too long	Recruits are expected to live in house (if applicable)	Operates year-round recruitment
		Recruitment tradition limits diversity	Uses a wiki page to track recruitment methods and results	Parents are involved and well informed
				All members are involved in extracurricular activities

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Risk Management	RM policies are not written	RM policies are not reviewed each year	Neighbors are invited to events	House is dry, drug-free
	Behavioral expectations are not enforced	House Manager attends HM meetings on campus	Closed events with alcohol use a bar service	House is flame-free
	Chapter is on probation with MIT	Group has no CARMA	FSILG has a CARMA	House manager reviews policies each semester
	Does not enforce RM policies	Group has little/no contact with neighbors	FSILG has an internal standards board	Summer boarders are solicited via MIT department connections
	House shows evidence of alcohol in most rooms	RA doesn't interact with alumni	RA is involved in house events	House has formal training for standards board
	Summer housing policies are poor or unenforced		Hard liquor is not allowed in house	Has summer recruitment manual
			Undergrads participate in IFC RM events	
Scholarship	Has no scholarship chair	Group has no faculty advisor	Provides awards for high GPA	High GPAs get tangible rewards
	2 or more terms with GPA in bottom quartile of FSILGs	Requires member GPA > 3.5	TAs hold classes at residence	Google Docs used for class notes and comments
	There is no minimum GPA requirement	Has study hours only for academic support	Quiet hours are observed Mon-Thurs.	Has regular visits from a faculty advisor
	There is no enforced "quiet time"		New members are informed about SSS	Develops personalized academic plans
				Has academic scholarships
Finances	Tax documents are behind schedule	has 6 months operating reserves	Has 1 yr operating reserve	Has 2 yr operating reserve
	House and alumni finance files are not shared	Reduces trash removal expenses by recycling	CPA used by alumni and undergrads for tax preparation	Summer housebills are collected up front
	Has alumni with unpaid housebills	Housebills are not manageable or vary unpredictably	Alumni have a capital plan	Alumni have a 10 yr capital plan
	Tax status is questionable	Has no capital plan	Has regular alumni contribution program	Housebills increase to build reserves
	Has no alumni house manager	Bill collection is informal	Chapter collections are over 98%	Undergrads pay bills in advance
		Accounts do not match FCI records	Participates in Donor recognition program	
		Some summer housebills are still due at the start of the term	Tax returns are in SLI locker	
Physical Plant	Housing certificate is not posted at entrance	Parts of facility are >3 yr beyond useful lifetime (too much deferred maintenance)	Renovations are planned	Substantial renovations were completed in last 5 yr
	Has no assigned house tasks	Inspections and permits are not up to date		Roof deck is certified (if applicable)
	Facilities are cluttered or poorly maintained	Certificates and docs are in SLI locker		
		Status of lease is uncertain (if applicable)		

Category	Fraternities	Sororities	ILGs
Alumni Programming	3.1	2.8	2.8
Governance and Oversight	3.2	3.7	2.9
Membership Development	3.0	3.5	2.3
Recruitment and Retention	3.1	3.6	3.4
Risk Management	2.8	3.7	3.2
Scholarship	2.8	3.4	2.1
Finances	3.1	3.4	3.1
Physical Plant	3.0	2.9	3.5



Appendix D: 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.