

MIT FSILG ACCREDITATION

Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee
Academic Year 2007-8

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MIT FSILG ACCREDITATION

Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee Academic Year 2007-8

Abstract

This report provides information about the Accreditation effort during the 2007-8 academic year, as operated by the Association of Independent Living Groups (AILG). The AILG Accreditation program, an organized peer review of the living groups within the MIT Fraternity, Sorority, and Independent Living Group (FSILG) community, is described. The findings of the review teams are summarized and presented in detail. In particular, there were many “best practices,” some of which were developed independently by several MIT living groups, which others could consider or benefit from by adopting. The review teams also pointed out areas where our living groups need improvement and have documented lessons learned that living groups should avoid having to learn independently. The process of internal review as carried out under this program is expected to improve the MIT living group community.

The program has been under development over a span of several years and has evolved considerably over that time. Beginning this year, the program was operated by a newly formed volunteer Accreditation Committee which met approximately monthly to plan operations and to advise and direct a part-time Accreditation Coordinator. With this formal structure, the program can now be considered to be in regular operation. This report also includes some discussion of the development of the program itself and some areas where continuing improvement is planned. Because the AILG volunteers were largely occupied during Fall Term with the incorporation of the AILG, the accreditation reviews for the 2007-8 academic year did not begin until Spring Term. 15 reviews were conducted. 13 of the organizations reviewed were recommended for accreditation, but in the case of four of these the visiting committees expressed “reservations”. Two organizations were not recommended for accreditation. These six organizations were found to need improvements in areas of governance and oversight; all will be revisited next term. In the intervening time, the assistance of MIT volunteers and staff is being offered to all organizations found to be needing improvement, and in the case of the two not recommended for accreditation, MIT has begun an active intervention and will require these organizations to show specific progress at resolving the issues identified during review.

Report Organization

Section 1 of this report outlines the Program Objectives. Section 2 provides an outline of the AILG-organized accreditation review approach. Section 3 summarizes the results of the accreditation program, providing an overview of the review status. Section 4 details the “best practices” of the FSILG community, which are considered to be methods employed which yield good results in a particular area of FSILG operation, such as in governance, recruitment, or member development. Section 5 describes areas of FSILG operation needing improvement and lessons learned from accreditation reviews. Section 6 gives a summary of areas where the Accreditation program should be improved. The Appendix, only available within the MIT Community, contains the full review reports from the Spring 2008 Accreditation program. Any responses to reviews received from the FSILGs are also included in the Appendix.

1. Program Objectives

There were two main objectives of the Accreditation program:

- Provide the MIT administration with a multi-dimensional evaluation of the overall health of each MIT living group that qualifies as a fraternity, sorority, or independent living group.

- Provide a program in which the 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.

2. Review Approach

2.1 Preparation. The reviews held during the Spring 2008 academic term adhered to an approach that resulted from prototyping over three 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 Member Development, Scholarship and Behavior, and the condition of the Physical Plant. The first year of the program, the 2004-5 academic year, was viewed as a trial period. 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 2005-6 academic year. The questionnaire was tightened, with less long-format answers, to reduce the effort to complete to about 8 hours and to be able to limit reviews to two hours. 7 more living groups were reviewed. For the 2006-7 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.

For the Spring 2008 review cycle, we began using two websites, one to contain historical information about previous years, and an operational website run by the Accreditation Coordinator which was used to post current schedules, status, results, and active documents. The addresses of these websites are provided in Section 8 of this report (References). This year only minor modifications were made to the questionnaire, and an online guide with item-by-item instructions was provided on the operational website to assist the FSILGs in completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was delivered to each living group three to four weeks in advance of the review. We emphasized that Alumni and Undergraduates were expected to work together to complete the questionnaire. Responses were recorded on a spreadsheet as a relatively simple storage media for later use to help start the next review of the same living group, expected to take place in a two years or less cycle. The review teams consisted of three to four AILG members each. We requested that each FSILG provide at least two members of the house corporation or advisory team (and preferably more) and at least two active members of the living group (and preferably more for a learning experience) to discuss and clarify the responses. The undergraduate members present were usually the officers — president, house manager, or treasurer. The questionnaire responses were distributed to the reviewers before the review in most cases. However, some were incomplete on the day before the review and were distributed and used anyway with additional data acquired at the review.

2.2 Timetable. Three Saturdays in February, March, and April were selected for reviews. Four to five reviews were held on each Saturday, and one was scheduled for a week night to accommodate the religious practices of one of the undergraduate officers. We successfully completed all of our planned 15 reviews. In order to hold so many reviews, two teams were formed for each of the review dates so that no team had more than three reviews over an 8 hour period. We began each review day with a 30 minute meeting over a full hot breakfast where we briefed each of the Visiting Committees about the schedule and to discuss review procedures to improve uniformity. We began at 8:15AM with all reviewers. The first review of the day would start at 9:00AM. Reviews generally would last about 90 minutes each, with 15 minutes between reviews for travel between living groups and discussion. Lunches were provided for a one-hour noontime break. All reviews were completed by either noon or 3PM. The review teams were asked to spend two hours after their last review (or after lunch if the team only had two reviews) to compare notes and prepare preliminary reports. We asked teams to submit their reports within one to two weeks of their visits, but less than one-third of the teams were able to complete their work this quickly.

2.3 Resources and Budget. The amount of volunteer effort was substantial. Each reviewer contributed 6 to 8 hours of time during one day of reviews, and a number of reviewers participated on two out of the three Saturdays (and in some cases represented their own organization on the other side of the table on the third Saturday). An additional few hours would be spent examining the questionnaire response and reviewing the team reports for each living group. As a result, individual reviewers spent between 10 and 30 hours on accreditation, for a total of about 220 hours of volunteer review time.

Based on what was learned about this in previous years, at the end of the 2006-7 year, then Accreditation Coordinator Herman Marshall submitted a proposal to provide some paid assistance to the volunteers. The proposal included a paid Accreditation Coordinator working approximately 120 hours during the academic year (\$6000), a writer who would spend approximately 8 hours on each of 20 reviews (\$4800), payment to the FSILG Cooperative for about 2.5 hours of data analysis and archival on each of 20 reviews (\$3000), an anticipated use of 80 hours of MIT administrative time during the academic year (not to be charged to the AILG budget), and approximately \$1200 of miscellaneous expenses including meals.

This year's program was operated by a newly-formed Accreditation Committee consisting of four volunteers including chairman Herman Marshall, David Burmaster, Bob Ferrara, and Ernie Sabine. Regular meetings of the committee were held approximately monthly and were attended by a representative from the MIT FSILG office, Kaya Miller, and former volunteer John Covert, who was hired by the Committee to fill the position of Accreditation Coordinator. John has spent approximately 100 hours recruiting volunteers (with significant help in this effort from Bob Ferrara, the Alumni Association volunteer coordinator), 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. He is scheduled to spend an additional 60 hours during July and August converting the Basic Data Form from a spreadsheet to a web data entry form. During the reviews conducted in the Spring Term 2008, we spent approximately \$600 of the meal and minor expense budget. The program is using FCI for data archival (but not analysis).

2.4 Execution. A review sheet for use by reviewers developed in the 2006-7 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 the previous two years, there are three possible findings resulting from the review. The review team can (1) recommend accreditation, (2) recommend accreditation with reservations, or (3) not recommend that the living group be accredited. Any reservations to recommending accreditation should be explained well enough that officers of the living group can take appropriate action before the next review. A detailed explanation should be entered if the review team does not recommend that the living group be accredited. Making a revisit mandatory during the next term for any organization not receiving the highest recommendation is a new policy adopted this year; previously the visiting team determined the revisitation schedule.

General comments for MIT and AILG members. In this section, the reviewers list 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 is for items that are of a more sensitive nature. This section allows the reviewers to make comments that reflect the detailed discussion during the review. These may involve sensitive 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 level of privacy afforded to these comments was a topic of significant discussion within the Accreditation Committee and with the AILG Board. We adopted the following written policy for these comments: Sent with the report to the living group. When the report is filed, these are maintained separately. In the event of a "recommend accreditation with reservations" or "not recommended" decision, the private comments will be provided to the next visiting Committee and the AILG board

(not via email). The private comments are not sent to the Dean's office. Retention period 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.

2.5 Completion. As in past years, report delivery was somewhat irregular. There were cases where the Accreditation Coordinator had to resort to daily email reminders to the members of the Visiting Committees in order to obtain the reports. Some reports were delivered more than two months after the review, but all were done in time for this report. Applying the experience of previous years did result in delivery improvements, as did the adoption of a policy that either the scribe or the committee chair could unilaterally declare a report complete if other committee members were non-responsive.

A significant speedup in delivery over the previous year was obtained by having the scribe or the visiting committee chairman (at the committee's option) 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 developed and 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 substantially changed report was returned for an updated set of comments from the FSILG.

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 as soon as the comment period had expired. Those where the finding included reservations or did not recommend accreditation were first sent to the AILG Board for their concurrence with the committee's finding, and if the Board concurred, sent to the Deans. In the event the report needed to be sent back to the Visiting Committee for editing, a new response was requested from the FSILG if the changes were substantive.

3. Review Results

We reviewed 15 of the 37 FSILGs which are currently active at MIT. 13 of these were recommended for accreditation, although four of these were with reservations. Please see the table on the next page.

In the case of the six organizations where the finding included reservations or did not recommend accreditation, the visiting committees listed the reasons for their decision in the findings in their reports (see the Appendix). Of these six, only Fenway House and Phi Delta Theta submitted written responses to their reviews. Comments were also received from four of the organizations which received an unqualified recommendation: Beta Theta Pi, Delta Upsilon, Phi Kappa Sigma, and Student House. These comments, which are included in Appendix A, will be kept with the reports and were forwarded together with the reviewers' reports to the MIT administration insofar as the comments related to the public section of the reports.

All six of these organizations will be revisited next term. In the intervening time, the assistance of MIT volunteers and staff is being offered to all organizations found to be needing improvement, and in the case of the two not recommended for accreditation, MIT has begun an active intervention and will require these organizations to show specific progress at resolving the issues identified during review.

Due to the fact that students transition through each residential living group over a three 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 keep to the goal of reviewing 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.

To continue with our two-year planned review cycle and our next term revisitation schedule, we must

review 22 organizations next year which have not been reviewed since the 2006-7 academic year, revisit the 6 organizations identified above as needing improvement, plus one additional organization where the reviewers did not return a finding of “reservations” but nonetheless recommended a return visit next year. Our preliminary schedule for next year has us reviewing 15 FSILGs during Fall Term and 14 during the Spring Term (plus any revisits in Spring Term required as a result of findings returned from the Fall Term reviews). This will be an aggressive schedule, and will require several more volunteer reviewers than were used this year. Potential volunteers are asked to contact the Accreditation Coordinator or the Committee as soon as possible.

The table below shows all active FSILGs at MIT with the dates and results of the most recent reviews and the planned timeframe for the next review. The 15 FSILGs reviewed during Spring 2008 are listed first, with the FSILG name in bold type.

FSILG	Last Review	Finding	Next Review
Alpha Epsilon Pi	03-Mar-2008	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2008
Alpha Tau Omega	05-Apr-2008	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2008
Beta Theta Pi	05-Apr-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Delta Kappa Epsilon	09-Feb-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Delta Upsilon	05-Apr-2008	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Fenway House	05-Apr-2008	Not Recommended for Accreditation	Fall 2008
Phi Delta Theta	01-Mar-2008	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2008
Phi Kappa Sigma	09-Feb-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Pi Lambda Phi	09-Feb-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Sigma Chi	01-Mar-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Student House	01-Mar-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Tau Epsilon Phi	09-Feb-2008	Recommend Accreditation with Reservations	Fall 2008
Theta Chi	01-Mar-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Theta Delta Chi	05-Apr-2008	Not Recommended for Accreditation	Fall 2008
Zeta Psi	09-Feb-2008	Recommend Accreditation	2009-10
Alpha Chi Omega	18-Nov-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
Alpha Delta Phi	02-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
Alpha Epsilon Phi		Not yet reviewed	Fall 2008
Alpha Phi	16-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Chi Phi	16-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Delta Tau Delta	10-Feb-2007	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Epsilon Theta	02-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
Kappa Alpha Theta	02-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Kappa Sigma	28-Nov-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
Lambda Chi Alpha	16-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Nu Delta	10-Feb-2007	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Number 6 Club	10-Feb-2007	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Phi Beta Epsilon	02-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
Phi Kappa Theta	16-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Phi Sigma Kappa	18-Nov-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
pika	02-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Sigma Kappa	16-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Sigma Nu	18-Nov-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
Sigma Phi Epsilon		Not yet reviewed	Spring 2009
Theta Xi	18-Nov-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Fall 2008
WILG	02-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009
Zeta Beta Tau	16-Dec-2006	Recommend Accreditation	Spring 2009

4. Best Practices in the MIT FSILG community

A sampling of the “best practices” identified by the review teams are presented below, edited to be more general. Many of these practices were reported to be in operation at more than one organization. All of the best practices are contained in the full reports in the Appendix, available to any member of

the MIT AILG community. It is important to note that a best practice found in one living group may not necessarily be appropriate for another. This is not a “one size fits all” situation. Rather, the idea is to offer practices for the consideration of each individual living group. Should a group desire more information about any particular item, they can contact any member of the AILG Accreditation Committee or the Accreditation Coordinator.

4.1 Governance

- a) A 12-member Alumni Board meets monthly at the house.
- b) The alumni board structure has four officers plus three at-large with three year, staggered rotations.
- c) The group has a strong tradition of passing down information to subsequent leaders and routinely updating risk management policies.
- d) There is significant undergraduate interest in leadership positions with at least two competitive candidates for each of the main officer positions.
- e) Great importance is placed on the office and in the person of the undergraduate Treasurer. The undergraduates have an Assistant Treasurer who is then expected to serve as the full Treasurer for two years.
- f) Some houses maintain a wiki to aid in transfer of knowledge from one generation of officers to the next.
- g) Events are held that encourage alumni attendance, such as apple picking.

4.2 Financial

- a) Alumni have started a scholarship fund which is administered by MIT and is awarded to two students per year.
- b) An important Best Practice is to have both a solid financial plan and good capital plan.
- c) Some groups retain Omega Financial to submit and collect undergraduate house-bills and to manage any payments in arrears.

4.3 Recruitment and Member Development

- a) Year-round recruiting is done with a “dessert night” every Wednesday at 10pm.
- b) Monday “cocoa” events afford good opportunities for new members to bond with the existing members.
- c) In order to encourage Freshmen to eat dinner at the house, some FSILGs reported that they do not charge new members a fee for meals. This is a good practice if the organization's finances are adequate to afford it.
- d) Some organizations have moved dinner to 7:30, resulting in much better attendance, particularly from sports team members.
- e) Having the members of the group responsible for cooking may help instill a sense of duty

that carries over to other areas. Several organizations reported that members do all the cooking.

- f) One group reports that they have created a program whereby each person living in the house earns credits for their work serving dinner, washing dishes, cleaning the building and doing repairs.
- g) Another group reports a consistent, organized way to assign house work for the members.
- h) Members participate annually in their National leadership development program as well as the regional leadership program. A representative attends the National annual Presidents' Retreat.
- i) An Alumni Employment Network provides an important resource in assisting graduating seniors in finding full-time employment.
- j) The national Associate Member program makes an 800 service hotline available to new members as part of their anti-hazing program.
- k) Many groups have formal alumni advisory and/or mentorship programs.
- l) A notable event that set one group's strong recruitment program apart this year was an ice cream social showcasing alumni.
- m) A point is made of eating dinner together and of having each brother present for the entire meal. They make a point of shuffling roommates with each reassignment to maximize the number of different brothers they've roomed with.

4.4 Community Relations

- a) Joining community organizations such as the Back Bay Association gives the group not only visibility but a voice into community issues.
- b) Many groups report high numbers of members involved in other campus organizations, and that they recruit significant numbers of new members from these same organizations.
- c) Undergraduates and alumni complete many community service projects in Boston and on campus every year.
- d) The group has a working relationship with MIT IRDF, Dean's Office, Financial Aid, and other relevant MIT offices.

4.5 Scholarship

- a) The recent construction of a new study room appears to have reaped numerous benefits. The room is seeing heavy use, including by visiting non-resident freshman brothers. It looks like the room will have a positive impact on both scholarship and recruiting.
- b) Students have week-night study hours in the Living Room, and the house has two new Athena terminals and a new printer in the Study.
- c) The group puts a focus on working efficiently, with the week reserved for study so that they

can enjoy work-free weekends.

- d) The strong value on academics is demonstrated by sponsored study sessions with food provided and regular seminar series. The alumnus RA leads a resume building workshop for the rest of the house.

4.6 Physical Plant

- a) All emergency contact information is clearly posted by the front exit.
- b) Each undergraduate living in the building pays a refundable security deposit to cover any damage to the facility or its major contents.
- c) The RA also performs the formal function of the Corporation's Facilities Officer.

5. Areas of the MIT FSILG community Needing Improvement and Lessons Learned

Below are some of the areas where individual organizations needed improvement and some lessons learned. As with the previous section, these items were often reported at more than one FSILG and have been somewhat generalized. The reports in the Appendix contain all of the specific results.

5.1 Governance

- a) There should be an alumni presence during CPW, so that alumni can speak with parents about the benefits of FSILGs.
- b) Review teams would like all organizations to plan on having two or more undergraduates and two or more alumni attend meetings with a Visiting Committee. These are outstanding learning opportunities for everybody involved.
- c) Undergraduates and the alumni sometimes did not coordinate or unify their incomplete data submissions; to us this is but one symptom of the need for intense and vibrant communication.
- d) There are organizations which need additional alumni involvement on the governing board to groom successors to the current (and in some cases aging) members and to provide long term guidance and stability for the organization.
- e) The Corporation should have at least one Board meeting per semester in person at the house so that undergraduates can participate. Currently all meetings take place via teleconference.
- f) The normal route provided by the IFC for obtaining a faculty advisor is not effective in delivering the desired results. This issue should be taken up with either faculty or the administration so that FSILGs can have faculty advocates.
- g) Semiannual alumni corporation meetings may not be sufficient.
- h) Undergraduate officers should meet separately from the house meetings to plan and organize house governance.

5.2 Financial

- a) If an FSILG has little or no formal process for collecting term bills from its members, term bill collections are poor, and the organization cannot manage its cash flow or meet its financial obligations to the alumni housing corporation or its vendors. This in turn puts pressure on the corporation's finances and can lead to complete failure of the organization.
- b) Utilize MIT for registration and graduation holds. Consider rewarding early full payments with a discount (for example, a two percent discount if the term bill is paid in full on move-in day).
- c) In at least one case, the house corporation and the alumni association do not appear to have adequate financial reserves. Applying for a IRDF Educational Operating Grant should help.
- d) In a number of organizations, there should be more effort to solicit alumni donations to maintain the property and volunteers to guide and advise the undergraduates.
- e) Though their cash flow patterns are uneven, some organizations have learned to use year-long budgeting to help manage this.
- f) One organization within the community has learned the importance of re-evaluating and revising their policies and procedures on summer boarders. Summer dormer rent could be collected in full at the beginning of the summer to ensure payment.
- g) It is important for the alumni to educate the undergraduate members in the details and methods of financial stewardship, financial planning, and financial reporting, including tax filings. The undergraduates need to know, for example, the relationship between their houseflies and any subsidy from the alumni, as well as the ability for the to survive if any one of the various income sources is cut off or diminished.

5.3 Recruitment and Member Development

- a) Some of the organizations need to improve recruitment and increase membership. Adapting to the requirement that freshmen live in MIT dormitories for the first year has been difficult for some of the organizations. In some cases even a large percentage of upper-class members do not live at the house, making it more difficult to maintain the building and govern the organization.
- b) FSILGs need to have a policy concerning non-resident member obligations and responsibilities. One organization was not sure who its non-resident members are (whether they are active or not), and there seems to be a culture of members moving out of the house and then "free riding" by eating meals at the house, coming to parties, etc., while not paying for these privileges or otherwise supporting the group. Upper class membership retention is low when compared to other MIT ILG's, with a relatively high proportion of juniors and seniors moving out, often in mid-year.
- c) Many FSILGs need to do more year-round recruitment rather than just focusing on Rush.
- d) For one FSILG, despite the large number of pledges and strong recruitment program, the retention rate seems lower than normal.

- e) The practice in some organizations of housing single semester graduate (or undergraduate) students detracts from a cohesive living environment.
- f) In some cases, the length of the pledge program is much longer than the common nationally recommended length of 8 weeks, sometimes exceeding even the mandated maximum of twelve weeks.

5.4 Community Relations

- a) Establish clear lines of communication with neighbors to minimize problems. Provide officer contact information, especially cell phone numbers, to abutters and other key neighbors. Printed “refrigerators cards” of the most up to date information are recommended.

5.5 Behaviour

- a) Some FSILGs do not have an enforceable and realistic risk management policy;
- b) In some cases, policies are not written down and enforcement seems lax. In at least one FSILG, is little formal training of the new members regarding risk management. Risk management is a group effort, in contrast to the existing style of individual responsibility. A group risk management policy should be written, completely explained to current and new members, and enforced.

5.6 Physical Plant

- a) The physical plant was not in good shape during our visit. One example of this was garbage bags lying around the entrance to the chapter. Additionally the general appearance of the interior was worn down. It was the opinion of the review panel that a basic level of painting as well as carpet and furniture replacement would go a long way to improving the appearance of the chapter house. The members who were interviewed claimed to have a sense of pride in the house that did not seem to be reflected in this appearance.
- b) The house was very messy, with trash in the foyer and common areas. Cleanliness is related to health and safety and behavior can be affected. Dining tables should be repaired or replaced so that they can be used.

6. Areas of Accreditation that Need Improvement and Planned Changes for Next Year

In this section are some of the areas where the accreditation program needs improvement and changes which we are planning to implement next year.

Many members of visiting committees felt that the 90-minute interview was too short and recommended that we schedule a full two hours. Next year we will do this, with the first interview running from 9am to 11am, followed by an hour to complete the first draft of the report, followed by lunch at noon, followed by a second interview from 1pm to 3pm, followed by an hour to complete the first draft of the report.

With the additional time, a house tour should be included as a part of the visit.

Reviewers suggested that (where applicable), there be more information collected about national organizations and the support they provide to locals and the relationship of the local to the national

organization. Reviewers also suggested that specific questions about alumni communications be asked, such as about email contacts, web contacts, and newsletter archives.

The format of the Basic Data Form needs some work. It is a goal for next year to make it possible to complete the form online, save output, and update and add information, and to produce a printable result.

Reviewers suggested that we have a mix of older and younger alumni on each review team. Not only would this help get a “generation-balanced” review, it would help to bring newer alumni into the process. This will be important next year, as we will need several more volunteers to meet our schedule.

When collecting and evaluating data, a tension exists between (a) developing and operating with a system of formal objective review metrics and (b) the current practice of recognizing the individuality of each organization and not attempting to use any sort of “one size fits all” measurement system. We assign to each visiting committee the responsibility to determine both the subjective and objective importance of each datum in our data collection mechanism as well as the responsibility to go beyond our formal “Basic Data Form” and collect and report on other facts about each organization. At this time we do not know how to develop or apply system “a” in our diverse environment. While we expect to continue to operate with system “b”, we welcome new volunteer members of the Accreditation Committee who have the skills to help us improve and apply an effective synthesis of both systems.

We must keep in mind that the evaluation process in the accreditation program is designed to report on the overall health of each organization and the community, to return a finding of whether to recommend accreditation (or not) for each organization evaluated, and to make and share recommendations (and sometimes requirements) to improve both individual member organizations and the community as a whole. Accreditation is neither an awards program nor a program to develop and publish relative rankings of the organizations within the community.

7. 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: Steve Baker, Dave Berger, David Burmaster, Helen Chuah, Bob Ferrara, Heidi Fox, Tom Hoover, Ladd Horvath, Alicia Hunt, Jim Janosky, Ara Knaian, Alice Leung, Herman Marshall, Ernie Sabine, Bob Steininger, Steve Summit, Aaron Wippold, and Stan Wulf. And we thank all the participants in previous years who helped to develop a successful, working program, especially Herman Marshall, whose report on the 2006-7 process provided an excellent template for as well as quite a bit of still-relevant content for this year's report.

8. References

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

mitailg.org/accreditation/accreditation.html

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

web.mit.edu/covert/ailgreviews/

Appendix: 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 on pages numbered A-1 through A-37. 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 community may obtain copies of any or all of the reports by contacting the Accreditation Coordinator, the FSILG office, or the FSILG Cooperative.