MIT FSILG ACCREDITATION

Report of the AILG Accreditation Committee
Academic Year 2013-14

Herman Marshall '78, Chairman
David Burmaster '69
Bob Ferrara '67
Ernie Sabine '66

John Covert
Accreditation Coordinator

Marlena Love
Adam McCready
Jacob Oppenheimer
MIT FSILG Office Representatives

7 October 2014
Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. 1
Overview ................................................................................................................................................ 1
1. Challenges and New Features of the 2013-14 Academic Year ...................................................... 2
   1.1. Increased Participation of FSILGs in Visiting Committees ......................................................... 2
   1.2. Participation by MIT Deans ........................................................................................................ 3
   1.3. Metrics ........................................................................................................................................ 3
2. Program Objectives .......................................................................................................................... 3
3. Review Approach .................................................................................................................................. 3
   3.1. Preparation ..................................................................................................................................... 3
   3.2. Timetable ....................................................................................................................................... 5
   3.3. Resources and Budget .................................................................................................................... 5
   3.4. Mechanisms ................................................................................................................................... 6
   3.5. Execution ....................................................................................................................................... 6
   3.6. Completion .................................................................................................................................... 7
4. Review Results ...................................................................................................................................... 8
5. Areas of Accreditation that Need Improvement and Other Plans for Next Year ......................... 9
   5.1. Areas of Focus for Next Year ......................................................................................................... 10
   5.2. Plans and Continued Areas of Focus ............................................................................................ 11
6. Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................................ 11
7. References .......................................................................................................................................... 12
Appendix A: Best Practices in the MIT FSILG Community ................................................................. 1
Appendix B: Areas of the MIT FSILG Community Needing Improvement ......................................... 1
Appendix C: Lessons Learned – Gleaned from 2013-2014 Accreditation Reports ............................. 1
Appendix D: Compendium: FSILG Review Reports .............................................................................. 1
Abstract

This report describes the Accreditation Program during the 2013-14 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. A total of 21 reviews at 18 different FSILGs were conducted this academic year. During the Fall Term, 11 reviews were conducted, and during the Spring Term, 10 reviews were conducted. 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. This is an important program and we thank the many volunteers for their service.

Overview

The program has been under development for the past decade and has evolved considerably over that time. This was the seventh 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 three of the organizations reviewed in the Fall. Six of the reviews conducted during the Fall had been delayed from April of the previous year due to the campus and citywide crisis two days before the originally planned review date. The year ended with all organizations recommended for accreditation, although in three cases the Visiting Committee expressed “reservations.” These organizations were found to need
improvements in areas of governance, oversight, and recruitment. Two will be revisited during Fall 2014. The issues for the third organization involve administrative attention to IRS paperwork, and the visiting committee recommended waiting until Spring 2015 to allow time for a full IRS filing cycle before returning. Three organizations recommended for accreditation were 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 2013-14 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 2013-14 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 and B 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 21 reviews run in the 2013-14 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 2013-14 Academic Year

The 2013-14 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. 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 25 of our 39 living groups, but did not recruit alumni/ae volunteers from any new organizations during the past year. In addition, volunteers from three organization which had previously provided
volunteers left the area or stopped providing availability to the Accreditation Coordinator. We need to continue working toward broadening our volunteer base.

1.2. Participation by MIT Deans

Dean Henry Humphreys, the Senior Associate Dean for Residential Life and Dining, was invited by one of our organizations to participate in a review this year. We plan to continue occasional invited participation by various MIT Deans in the future.

1.3. Metrics

The committee began work on a rubric to provide uniform standards by which living groups are reviewed. We decided to use an online survey to assign objective rankings based on individual living group characteristics, accomplishments, and capabilities. The concept is that it will be filled out by the review team members and by the living group attendees who will evaluate statements covering a wide range of areas ranking each from 1-4. We began developing the survey with help from the Division of Student Life, and will complete and test the survey during the 2014-5 academic year.

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 2013-14 academic year followed an approach that began with a prototype nine years ago and has been operational for seven 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 had a significant
improvement over previous years in on-time report completion, with only one FSILG whose work on the form was not completed until three days before the review.

3.2. Timetable

Five Saturdays, one in September, two in November and one in March and April, were selected for reviews. Two 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 all 21 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. 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 28 reviewers (whose names appear under “Acknowledgments”) contributed four to eight hours of time during one day of reviews. More than a third of these reviewers were scheduled for two of the five Saturdays, but this year, for the first 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 four alumni 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, Marlena Love, Adam McCready, or 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 200 hours 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 2013-14 academic year, we spent $1207 on meals, $255 on transportation, and $2 on supplies, which is about $300 per review Saturday. The program has contracted with FCI for archival of encrypted data and other miscellaneous services.

3.4. Mechanisms.

The new BDF system developed two 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 have now begun 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.

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 remained similar to the prior year overall, but improved during the Spring. Twelve (57 percent) of the reports were sent to the FSILGs within two weeks (8 within one week) but during the Fall, four of the reports took more than three weeks. As a result, the Accreditation Coordinator implemented a completely automated email reminder system 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 except those requiring approval by the AILG Board sent to the Deans by 3 May, and those require approvals forwarded to the Deans by 3 June. The policy that either the scribe or the Visiting Committee chair could unilaterally declare a report complete if other committee members were non-responsive only needed to be applied in the case of one team this year; otherwise 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. Due to style reviews by the Accreditation Coordinator prior to submission to
the Board for reviews with “reservations”, this was avoided, with the Accreditation Coordination 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 2013-14 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 2013-14, we reviewed 18 of the 39 FSILGs which are currently active at MIT. Three 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 three of these final report included “reservations”. These organizations were found to need improvements in areas of recruitment, governance, and alumni involvement; two will be revisited next term, and because of the nature of 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 2013-14 academic year with the dates and results of the most recent reviews and the planned timeframe for the next review. The names of the 18 FSILGs reviewed during the year are in bold.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Last Review</th>
<th>Result at last review</th>
<th>Next review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Chi Omega</td>
<td>01-Dec-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Delta Phi</td>
<td>3-Nov-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Epsilon Phi</td>
<td>18-Nov-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Epsilon Pi</td>
<td>18-Nov-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Phi</td>
<td>16-Nov-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Tau Omega</td>
<td>04-Apr-2009</td>
<td>Not Recommended for Accreditation</td>
<td>No undergrad organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beta Theta Pi</td>
<td>08-Mar-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Phi</td>
<td>05-Mar-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Kappa Epsilon</td>
<td>28-Sep-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Tau Delta</td>
<td>05-Apr-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation with Reservations</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Upsilon</td>
<td>09-Mar-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>No undergrad organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epsilon Theta</td>
<td>1-Dec-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenway House</td>
<td>05-Apr-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation with Reservations</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kappa Alpha Theta</td>
<td>12-Feb-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kappa Sigma</td>
<td>20-Oct-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambda Chi Alpha</td>
<td>17-Nov-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nu Delta</td>
<td>02-Apr-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 6 Club</td>
<td>16-Nov-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Beta Epsilon</td>
<td>23-Nov-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Delta Theta</td>
<td>30-Oct-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Kappa Sigma</td>
<td>08-Mar-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Kappa Theta</td>
<td>12-Feb-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Sigma Kappa</td>
<td>03-Nov-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pi Beta Phi</td>
<td>01-Dec-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pi Lambda Phi</td>
<td>05-Apr-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Alpha Epsilon</td>
<td>09-Mar-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Chi</td>
<td>08-Mar-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Kappa</td>
<td>12-Feb-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Nu</td>
<td>05-Apr-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation with Reservations</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Phi Epsilon</td>
<td>16-Nov-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student House</td>
<td>08-Mar-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tau Epsilon Phi</td>
<td>23-Nov-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theta Chi</td>
<td>05-Apr-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theta Delta Chi</td>
<td>05-Apr-2014</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theta Xi</td>
<td>17-Nov-2012</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILG</td>
<td>05-Mar-2011</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeta Beta Tau</td>
<td>28-Sep-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeta Psi</td>
<td>28-Sep-2013</td>
<td>Recommend Accreditation</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accreditation Committee has reviewed all suggestions received during Academic Year 2013-14 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 28 Visiting Committee members this year were drawn from only 20 of our 39 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 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.

**Assessment of Accreditation Program.** While we believe the Accreditation Program is one of the AILG's premier 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.

During the last several committee meetings of the 2013-14 academic year and continuing into the next year, the committee has been actively developing a set of specific metrics that will allow computation of an overall “score” for each group. Our current plan, once this is completed during the Fall 2014 semester, is to have the Visiting Committee and the Organization independently complete this scoring exercise and discuss it during the review.

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 26 of our 39 organizations, 15 during the Fall Term. During the Spring Term we have planned reviews at 11 FSILGs, plus any revisits in the Spring Term required as a result of findings returned from the Fall Term reviews. As a result of this heavier schedule for the Fall as well as increased reporting requirements to implement the uniform evaluation criteria, the Accreditation Committee requested and obtained agreement from MIT for an increase in the Accreditation Coordinator's budgeted hours for the year to a total of 240.

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: Steve Baker, Dave Burmaster, Eric Cigan, Dan Craig, Bob Ferrara, Mike Garcia, Melissa Hansel, Michael Howard, David Hutchings, Jim Janosky, Jessica Kesner, Jim Latimer, Clifton Leigh, Alice Leung, Herman
Marshall, Akil Middleton, Jason Mondanaro, Kevin Moore, Vic Rhoads, Maria Robinson, Roy Russell, Josiah Seale, Tim Stumbaugh, Cecilia Stuopis, Steve Summit, Jim Wagner, Rick Winterson, and Stan Wulf. 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 Bryan Owens Bryson, Dan Dunn, Anya Kattef, LeAnn Lindsey, Herb Mower, Matthew Rodriguez, Ernie Sabine, Mark Spadafora, Mitch Westwood, and Yumi Yasutake. 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 Marlena 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/

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 2013-14 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 meet with the Alumni or Advisory Board or are active members of these boards.

2. * There is a higher minimum GPA for officers than for other members.

3. * Alumni and undergraduate officers update the house wiki, which includes information on various topics besides house management, such as UROP projects and cultural issues.

4. * Various officers have assistant positions that encourage smoother transitions. These are often new members.

5. A system like WebEx or Google Hangout can be used to keep geographically distributed Alumni involved. A person with an MIT ID can sign up for WebEx use.

Scholarship

6. * Scholarship is recognized with awards or points that can be redeemed for school supplies.

7. * Web-based services are used to record comments from upperclassmen for MIT classes.

8. The scholarship chair conducts a program of essay proof-reading.

Member Development

9. Undergraduates, especially officers, take advantage of leadership training events offered on-campus, by a national organization, or through external resources such as Growth Guiders and Project Adventure.

10. * The group hosts a dinner attended by 5-6 faculty members.

11. The group holds retreats each semester, varying the emphasis each time.

12. The chapter conducts a continuing member education program that develops members throughout the undergraduate period.
13. Mentoring relations can be developed separate members with different goals such as academic and career advising and officer training.

Alumni Programming

14. Annual events to which alumni are invited keeps them engaged and connected to the membership. Alumni "captains" can be used to encourage alumni from nearby class years to attend.

15. The alumni maintain schematics, plans, and other documents at a web site accessible to all alumni and members.

16. An explicit "graduation procedure" is used to capture contact information of departing members so that all may keep in touch.

17. The membership maintains alumni contacts to assist with their choice of majors, the search for summer jobs, career counseling, etc.

Financial and Physical Plant

18. * The Alumni and/or undergraduate organizations use a CPA to handle tax documentation.

19. The Society for the Preservation of Greek Housing was used to raise funds for house renovation in a fairly flexible manner.

20. * Summer housebills are collected up front and members that pay in advance are given a discount. * Summer housebills are collected up front and members that pay in advance are given a discount.

21. Summer boarders share clean-up chores with members.

22. House maintenance improves the return of capital campaigns by retaining the interests of alumni.

23. Capital improvements can be arranged on a rolling basis for simpler budgeting and to avoid substantial building overhaul.


25. Maintenance chores are tracked with a public system that allows "bounties" to be paid to those who handle incomplete cleanups, funded by fines.
Recruitment and Retention

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

27. An activities fee is charged to upperclassmen that stay in a dorm, encouraging full participation by all members. The fee can be used to offset meal costs so that all members may attend meals at the house.

28. Recruitment can be more effective when carried out year-round. Inviting classmates to the group's day-to-day activities can build affinity and create connections.

29. The undergraduate Rush Chair is debriefed by the alumni to ensure institutional knowledge of the efficacy of each rush event. Rush training can be shared between alumni and undergraduates.

30. Alumni can provide "behind the scenes" support for rush so that members have more time to interact with prospective recruits.

31. Term-time events for all members are conducted regularly without alcohol. Some are conducted off-site, avoiding the assembly limit issue.

32. The group has developed a lunch culture, eating together daily on campus.

33. New members are informed explicitly that they are expected to live in the house, when eligible.

Risk Management

34. During the summer, there is at least one member on each floor.

35. Occupancy licenses are used instead of rental agreements.

36. Members are 50% or more of the summer boarder total.

37. Summer boarders are personally known by members and there is a recruitment manual.

38. The internal standards board keeps contact with all members proactively, not just when a judicial issue arises. The board can also recognize performance beyond the call of duty and provide awards such as exemption from house cleanup duty.

39. A phone message system (such as GroupMe) is used for internal broadcasting of alerts and other time-critical information.
**Community Development**

40. Events are hosted that are well-attended by neighbors.

41. Community service focuses on the neighborhood and could involve cleaning up the street, shoveling snow for neighbors, or mentoring/tutoring students at a nearby school.
Appendix B: Areas of the MIT FSILG Community Needing Improvement

As with Best Practices, many 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 was highlighted. The reports in the Compendium contain all of the specific results reported by the committees.

1. Eleven of the 21 visiting committees made a total of 14 comments to 10 of the organizations recommending that each increase its involvement with its alumni/ae from the chapter.

2. A set of 11 visiting committees made a total of 14 comments to 8 of the organizations telling each that they need to improve the recruitment and/or retention of undergraduates in the chapter.

3. Ten of the visiting committees made a total of 15 comments to 9 of the organizations telling each to rectify deficiencies in their general financial management and oversight of the house corporation and/or the undergraduate chapter.

   ◦ In particular, the visiting committees reported deficiencies in 5 of the organizations in that each had failed to comply fully with state and federal tax laws and regulations -- in particular, each had not filed its Form 990 with the federal IRS for a year or more.

4. Seven of the visiting committees made a total of 7 comments, one each to different organizations, encouraging each to improve its risk management and safety practices on topics ranging from oversight at parties to repairs of treads on stairs.

5. Finally, the various visiting committees made comments on these topics to particular organizations:

   ◦ a total of 5 comments to 4 different organizations encouraged each to improve its academic performance.

   ◦ a total of 4 comments, one each to different organizations, encouraged each to recruit a Faculty Advisor pronto.

   ◦ a total of 4 comments, one each to different organizations, encouraged each to improve or revamp its policies concerning summer boarders.

   ◦ a total of 4 comments to 3 different organizations encouraged each to start or improve communications with the FSILG Office and/or with the AILG itself.

   ◦ a total of 3 comments, one each to different organizations, encouraged each to improve its communications and relationship with its National Headquarters.
a total of 3 comments, one each to different organizations, recognized certain deficiencies in the maintenance or cleanliness of its building.
Appendix C: Lessons Learned – Gleaned from 2013-2014 Accreditation Reports

1. An FSILG that stumbles and suffers significant IFC and DSL penalties can, with the active support of their alumni, recover and become a valuable member of the FSILG. And a chapter can even fully re-boot successfully. We now have several successful examples and models for doing this. All require active alumni engagement and support from the national (or international) headquarters.

2. It is possible to have thoroughly enjoyable non-alcohol based social entertainment events to bring brothers together. Trampoline Dodgeball (commercially available off-site) was one big hit. Even dry alumni events can be more engaging.

3. A local FSILG can significantly improve its new member education by implementing best practices from other national groups while discarding historical practices which are no longer considered acceptable in today’s society.

4. Many chapters use occupancy licenses in the place of rental agreements to prevent possible legal problems with removing summer boarders.

5. Many undergraduates have learned the hard way (i) that ‘risk management’ and ‘good behavior’ apply equally well to the students’ activities at all times, i.e., both on- and off-campus, and (ii) that it takes a long period of time and extensive efforts to recover from any events which have tarnished its reputation. The members should keep this in mind when planning future activities and when reviewing its existing programming.

6. Many chapters have learned that some international students, unaffiliated with MIT, are not as responsible summer tenants as domestic students are, and these chapters are no longer accepting non-MIT internationals as summer residents.

7. Undergraduates by the very nature of their regular turnover can easily lose track of institutional knowledge or inherit subsets of practices without knowing the underlying root policy. For example, this led to one chapter’s undergraduates mistakenly renting to non-MIT students during the academic year. Another example is when the Alumni of a group assumed tax filings had taken place by referring to prior year self-reporting. As a result, at all levels, chapters should attempt to institutionalize knowledge preservation. Having the Undergraduates report to the Alumni and receiving more active oversight and review, and hiring more professionals such as the CPA to ensure an outside dependable repository of knowledge and audit, are positive steps.

8. The brothers of several chapters have learned that it is difficult to recruit effectively during formal rush and have decided to move to a year-round recruitment model. Recruiting one’s friends and classmates does not have to be hard work; inviting them to join the chapter’s day-to-day activities can be used as a way of building affinity and creating connections.
9. This past year, for one chapter recruitment evolved from a complacent (and unsuccessful) version toward a more active approach, resulting in considerably more pledges. A wiki page is used for keeping track of methods that worked well.

10. In some chapters financial reserves are growing but insufficient for long-term planning, so the alumni are now becoming more active in fund-raising. Capital campaign can benefit from professional advice as to how to get the most out of their alumni. At MIT, both DSL and the Alumni Association’s Annual Fund have individuals ready to assist, along with the AILG’s Finance Committee.
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.