Student Guide for University Partnership

Importance of University Partnership:

SigEp and our host institutions aim to achieve similar goals of providing an enriching developmental experience for undergraduate members. As we strive to achieve this goal, collaboration between both parties is essential. The colleges and universities our chapters call home provide numerous resources that can support and enhance the SigEp student experience. The ideal SigEp experience is achieved through recruiting and developing members, creating a living-learning environment, support from alumni and volunteers, and engaging campus staff and faculty.

Elements of Effective Partnerships

Common Understanding	Purpose	Communication
Both organizations understand each other's framework, culture, values and approaches	Shared purpose provides a common vision, builds trust and recognizes value of the partnership	Strong channels allow for sharing and accessing knowledge between partners
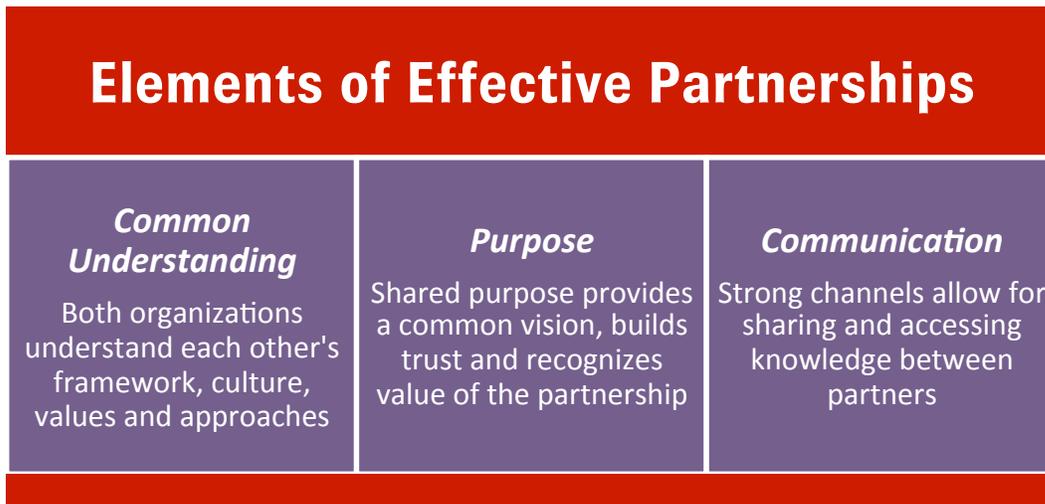
Adapted from CCF National Resource Center's *Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together*

Steps for Creating Partnerships with Your College or University:

Assess your chapter's needs and goals

Is your chapter trying to elevate your academic programming? Or maybe trying to become more engaged with the local community? Assessing your goals and needs as an organization will illuminate areas where partnership may provide a solution and further your chapter's initiatives. You should engage your chapter's Alumni and Volunteer Corporation to conduct a needs assessment to determine which areas might benefit most from partnerships. Developing programming through the BMP provides a great opportunity to work with content experts on your campus to serve as facilitators and speakers.

Become aware of and capitalize on available resources

Colleges and universities across the country are chock-full of departments designed to provide services and resources to students. Your Fraternity and Sorority Life advisor is an important person, as they serve as your liaison to the rest of campus and the university administration. They can also point you in the direction of other professionals who can be helpful to your chapter. Some other departments and areas to explore could include:

- Career Services
- Academic Support Services/Tutoring
- Office of Student Life/Campus Life
- Student Psychological Services
- Office of Community Service/Engagement
- Campus Health and Recreation
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Multicultural Centers
- Leadership Programs and Departments for Leadership Studies

Communicate clearly and professionally

Communication is one of the most critical components of any relationship. That includes partnerships. When working with a campus partner, be clear in communicating who SigEp is, the role your chapter plays on campus and what your chapter strives to do. Some potential partners may be entirely unaware of what SigEp aims to do, so providing a thorough explanation will be necessary. For on-going partnerships, regular and consistent communication will allow for both parties to stay informed and engaged. Whether in person or by email, communicating with your partners requires professional timeliness and thoughtfulness.

Identify your shared vision or goals

The most effective partnerships allow for both parties to benefit from the collaborative relationship. This is only possible with a shared vision or goal. In starting conversations with campus partners, be clear about how your vision and goals align with your partner's mission and initiatives. It is necessary for both parties involved to make contributions and benefit.

Determine leadership and liaisons for partnership

Who takes on this role will be dependent on the needs you are addressing, but clear points of contact are necessary for effective partnership. It is important to determine who will serve as the liaison to your partners on campus. This will provide consistency and accountability that will help foster relationships with partners. Some examples of positions that would focus on partnership might include, but are not limited to:

- Chapter President
  - Communicating and collaborating with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and senior-level administrators

- Vice President of Programming
  - Partnering with the Office of Service and Civic Engagement to plan service opportunities and philanthropic events
- Challenge Coordinators
  - Bringing in content-area experts from campus departments to facilitate challenge meetings
- Sound Body chairmen
  - Collaborating with campus recreation and student health services to provide programming

Ensuring chapters have the most beneficial experience is paramount. Strong partnerships with universities and collaborative relationships with your volunteers and Headquarters staff can help achieve this goal. Should you have any questions or need advice in building partnerships with your university, please contact Meghan Grace, director of undergraduate programming and university partnership, via email at meghan.grace@sigep.net.