

# The Stanford Daily

## From the community | Dear Admin: We know you don't work for us

*Alex Young, a masters student in chemical engineering, is a Founding Member of Abolish Stanford Greek and a former ISC sorority member. Abolish Stanford Greek is a coalition of students, alumni and faculty dedicated to ending the presence of historically white IFC/ISC Greek organizations on Stanford's campus. The group has more than 700 petition signers and 2,000 followers over Twitter and Instagram.*

The University's recent decision to house five Interfraternity Council (IFC) and six Intersorority Council (ISC) organizations next year demonstrates the administration's utter disregard for student welfare. The plan silences the voices of countless students harmed by Greek life, ignores the clear majority of students who want Greek life unhoused, and shows a lack of good faith in dealing with student advocates.

Administrators not caving to ASG's unreasonable demands isn't silencing them.

Student groups aren't decided this way.

In summer 2020, the student group Abolish Stanford Greek (ASG) released its founding op-ed urging Stanford to withdraw recognition of historically white IFC/ISC organizations. ASG's founders had tried to reform their Greek chapters, soften the racism and classism of recruitment, transform the misogyny and heteronormativity of social events, and erase the transphobia of gendered housing. They found, however, that national organizations force chapters to reinforce elitist, toxic and inequitable structures on our campus, no matter how sincere Greek student leadership may be in trying to reform.

This is racism.

Baseless smears.

Greek organizations have paid for the construction and maintenance of their homes. ASG wants to unfairly seize and redistribute them.

In fall 2020, the group presented an ASSU resolution to redistribute the ten Row houses reserved for IFC/ISC organizations back to the housing draw. Supporters highlighted the unfairness of a wealthy, white quarter of the student body occupying a third of Row houses. Apologists pointed to the community benefits of Greek life, but could not explain how such benefits were (a) exclusive to Greek life, (b) worth the harm, or (c) deserving of prime real estate on campus. Even the most avid proponents recognized the damage that Greek life has caused at Stanford, from hazing and eating disorders, to sexual assault, druggings, and death.

ASG cannot demonstrate causal relationship for any of these claims. Yet, they insist these are exclusively Greek problems.

As a result, the president of the IFC and Phi Kappa Psi, Terrell Edwards '21, stepped down from his position to support the resolution, stating that "Greek life needs the university to help it move forward, and I think unhousing is a great first step towards that ... unhousing presents the University with the opportunity to acknowledge underrepresented people on the Row." As Senator Leah Harris '21 put it, "I'm not sure why [Greek orgs] need to be housed to [reform]."

These homes belong to Greek organizations. They paid for them.

The resolution passed with supermajorities in both the Undergraduate Senate and Graduate Student Council, sending it to the Faculty Senate (where faculty could make recommendations). But the matter was tabled in winter 2021, with Vice Provost Susie Brubaker-Cole arguing that greater student input was needed. This was a point that the administrators stressed to ASG meeting after meeting; even with minority harms established, what was the majority student opinion?

None of this is justifiable. Individual rights to free association and property rights for homes paid for by fraternities aren't subject to the whims of student activists. Period.

Not a scientific survey and results are not reliable.

The question has been answered; ASG joined Greek representatives on a neutral ASSU committee to conduct a student body-wide survey in 2021. With a high and representative turnout, the survey found that 83% of undergraduates wanted to see some change in the Greek system, with 58% of undergraduates supporting unhousing Greek organizations in spring 2021. This percentage matched the 60% support for unhousing found in the Daily's fall 2020 survey.

Again, activists don't have the right to dictate organization membership of other students or to seize their historical homes.

The ASSU exec and ASG both met with administrators in separate meetings in spring 2021 to review the survey results and convey the ASSU recommendations to unhouse. In June 2021, the administration announced mostly single-year assignments for ten Greek houses, in a break from previous four-year assignments. ASG saw this as an incremental victory — an opportunity for the administration to see the oxymoronic impossibility of “equity, inclusion, and diversity” in Greek life that arose to protect wealthy networks, as higher education diversified.

housing insecurity is not a "victory."

Where is ASG's proof for such a claim? This is a totally baseless smear.

Throughout the 2021–2022 school year, ASG tried to meet with Vice Provost Brubaker-Cole and other administrators. In January, a promised meeting was understandably delayed as the Office of Student Engagement juggled rapidly changing COVID-19 restrictions. From January through March 2022, ASG received five separate emails from administrative schedulers confirming that a group meeting was being arranged to discuss housing allocations. In the meantime, ASG sent updates, including a transitional proposal for a smaller number of Greek houses and dorms, to reduce Greek life's disproportionate dominance over the Row.

How does ASG justify plans that seize the historic homes privately funded by the fraternities and sororities? That's theft.

But on March 10, without meeting with ASG, the administration acted. The Office of Student Engagement informed Greek chapters that they plan to increase the number of housed IFC/ISC organizations from ten to eleven, and add one Multicultural Greek organization. The new addition is Kappa Alpha, the fraternity previously unhousing for taking on non-paying boarders and also the site of the sexual assault of Chanel Miller. According to a March 9 LEAD 150 class presentation by three KA members, the chapter today is 75% white, compared to the 32.4% white study body.

ASG implies housing should be allocated on the basis of race. Race-based housing decisions are discriminatory and illegal.

Administrators know that the majority of students and victims of Greek life oppose these allocations. That may be why it took the university three weeks after informing chapters of their housing status to quietly publish their retrenchment of segregated Greek housing to the broader campus community.

Again, it doesn't matter what those opposed to Greek life want. ASG doesn't have a right to tell students which groups they can join. And they don't have the authority to direct the confiscation of the property of organizations simply because they don't like them. This is petty tyranny masked as activism.

Why do dues-only, selective-membership Greek organizations deserve campus houses over the 650+ open-membership clubs? No one has been able to explain why administrators believed to be acting in the interest of students did not listen to students — neither the majority who called for unhousing, nor ASG's 700 petition signers, nor the 150+ people who provided testimonials. Nor can anyone explain how administrators can continue to ignore statistics about the dangers of Greek houses, the fact that many fraternities have expressed willingness to unhouse or reconcile such action with ResX's recognition that the Row reflects “concerning demographic trends” (read: is overwhelmingly white).

There is a lot of diversity in Greek life. In Theta Delta Chi, 70% of members identify as non-white. Still, race should not be a determining factor for worthiness of housing.

These organizations paid for the construction of these homes and have historically occupied them. These are their homes.

These are empty buzz words. ASG has never been able to demonstrate a causal relationship between Greek organizations and unfortunate things that happen across student life.

This is a pretty outrageous accusation. Yet, ASG provides no evidence for its claim.

ASG has found only one explanation for all this: donor influence.

Does ASG think that Greeks, alumni, and supporters aren't entitled to voicing concerns as ASG has done?

Since ASG's founding, Greek organizations have organized letter-writing campaigns for their alumni to implore the Stanford administration to ignore ASG. Many letters have included threats of donation-withholding if the school takes steps to unhouse Greek life. This is significant because it is well-known that Greek alumni donate more to their universities than non-Greek alumni. Given that wealthy, connected students tend to join Greek life, it is also unsurprising that Greeks tend to be the wealthiest and the most powerful alumni.

This benefits the whole student body and future of Stanford. (You're welcome.)

Again, no proof. Back up your claim or don't make it.

We suspect these letters drove the administration to house eleven IFC/ISC organizations next year. It also seems likely that concerns about alumni donations have motivated the university to continue recognizing Greek organizations and award them with administrative support and special institutional privileges like off-campus banking, that no other clubs are allowed.

No proof. No proof. No proof.

Next year's housing allocations are a reminder that the Stanford administration embodies the status quo. Donor interests drive our administrators, even when those interests run counter to student safety, housing equity, minority protections, and majority opinion.

More baseless smears of Greek life as cause.

Minority protections again what exactly?

This decision is an insult to the entire Stanford community, but it does not mean the end of ASG. The administration cannot run out the clock on this movement and wait for us to graduate. ASG will continue to advocate for the best interests of all students, regardless of Greek affiliation. We will continue to provide support for victims of Greek life, counsel Greek members hoping to reform, leave, or decharter their organizations, and serve as a source of information for all. Our door is always open.

Are members of fraternities and sororities not part of the Stanford community? Who decides this?

ASG is expressly opposed to even the mere existence of fraternities and sororities? How, then, can it serve as impartial "counsel" to Greek students?