



# **The Fraternity Guide to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

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## THE FRATERNITY GUIDE TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

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## THE FRATERNITY GUIDE TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Beta Gamma Chi

### About

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at Beta Gamma Chi is rooted in gender equality. We have chosen to have an intentional but not exclusive focus on gender as a way to resist the heteronormative practices that cause oppression and exclusion within the LGBTQ+ community. A lens rooted in gender equality allows us to implement policies, practices, and strategies that result in fair and equitable opportunities for everyone. Using this lens compels us to work towards: (1) diversity in people, experiences, and perspectives; (2) equity in power, policy, and practice; and (3) inclusion in voice and culture.

### Our Goals

By engaging in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work as a fraternity, we believe we can achieve the following goals:

- Build a safe and brave space—an organizational culture of respect and belonging for all members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Dismantle exclusionary and micro-aggressive practices within and outside of the fraternity; identify correct practice.
- Support members in owning and challenging their own racial, gender, class, and sexual biases through membership accountability.

### Our Approach

We recognize that, as an organization, we won't get it right 100% of the time, but we are committed to doing our part in decreasing risk and harm. We believe the best way to engage in DEI work as a fraternity is through a tiered, phased approach. In phase one, which we have labeled Apply, we aim to apply a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens to our internal operations, our communication efforts, and our organizational culture. We have labeled phase two Advocate because within this phase we aim to use our digital platforms to promote DEI-related causes, leaders, organizations, and events. Finally, in phase three—Act—we aim to engage in the long term work of building programs, designing philanthropy projects, and leading events that intentionally meet our DEI goals.



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### Phase One | Apply

#### Communicate Our Intention

Choosing to prioritize and engage in DEI work at the national level is an enormous charge. It requires strategic planning on behalf of the executive staff to shape and frame the work. It also requires regional staff to actualize and implement the work.

But the most significant lift occurs at the individual level. In order for DEI work to thrive in every corner of the organization, each member has to embrace the shift and willingly engage in the work, but most importantly, each member has to invest time and energy into working on themselves. That means working to become aware of unconscious biases they hold, being aware of how those biases manifest and investing in building a toolkit to disrupt those manifestations.

At every level—nationally, regionally, and individually—this requires buy-in. Buy-in begins with the fraternity deliberately communicating an intention to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion. Here's how we create buy-in:

1. The fraternity will take a clear stance on inclusion, and make the promise to implement equitable practices and diversify membership.
2. We will be transparent, and publicly promote the fraternity's stance and intentions. This ensures that members, potential members, board members, and funders all understand where the organization stands and what the organization believes as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
3. We will leverage research and data that shows that diversity and inclusion will benefit individual members and strengthen the organization.
4. The fraternity will clearly communicate our DEI goals to members so that all members are aware of the action steps the fraternity is committed to taking, and so that members are aware of their expected contributions.
5. We will empower members to contribute to DEI work at both the regional and national levels.
6. We will clearly communicate policy changes and updates.

#### Take Immediate Corrective Action

The fraternity's Guide to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a preventative measure to ensure the safety and inclusion of all members. These action steps are designed to prevent the occurrence of exclusion, harm, and inequity. However, there may be times when we, as an organization or as individuals, don't get it right. In those instances, we must take immediate action to rectify the mistake and prevent the recurrence of that harm.

1. We are calling on members to resolve harm in moments when they misgender someone by apologizing and correcting themselves, and we will hold all members accountable to this.
2. As an institution, we work to actively ensure that our systems are not causing harm by welcoming honest dialogue during open forums and feedback through DEI-related questions on our semi-annual member survey.



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### **Diversify Our Membership**

We recognize that our fraternity largely consists of cis-gendered men. In fact, only 19% of our members identify as non-binary or transgender. As our brand proclaims, we are diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioners that are focused on creating safe spaces within and outside of the LGBTQ+ community. In order to live in this truth, our organizational culture must reflect the diversity and inclusion efforts that we are calling for in and beyond queer spaces. Here's how we plan to diversify our membership:

1. We will ensure that our Membership & Recruitment Committee, interview team, Deans of Membership, and Big Brothers are diverse in gender and sexual orientation.
2. We will set and monitor strategic diversity intake goals.
3. We will actively recruit diverse members in networks designed for marginalized groups.
4. We will ensure our fraternity leaders are diverse in gender and sexual orientation.
5. We will note when voices in the room are not diverse.

### **Implement Inclusive Pronoun Practices**

Using someone's correct gender pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their identity, just as using a person's name can be a way to respect them. Pronouns are used in everyday speech and writing to take the place of people's names. We frequently use them without thinking about it. Often, people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on the person's appearance or name. These assumptions are not always correct, and the act of making an assumption (even if correct) sends a potentially harmful message that people have to look a certain way to demonstrate the gender that they are or are not.

We liken misgendering someone to harassment. It can be offensive to guess at someone's pronouns and refer to them using those pronouns if that is not how that person wants to be known. Additionally, actively choosing to ignore the pronouns someone has stated that they go by is oppressive.

Here's how we will make this shift:

1. The fraternity will request pronouns in emails, on forms, and on applications whenever someone's pronouns are unknown.
2. All members will be required to display their pronouns in their email signatures.
3. Pronouns will always follow a name in parenthesis whenever a name appears in an email, email campaign, on the website, or on social media.
4. We will require every meeting and event to begin with participants introducing their names and pronouns.
5. We will ask all members to avoid gendered language "i.e. Good evening gentlemen," with the exception of the use of "brothers" and "fraternity".
6. We will require all participants to update their screen name to include their pronouns on every Zoom call.



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### **Put Equity in Action**

At Beta Gamma Chi, equity is about each member getting what they need in order to feel safe, privileged, and successful in our fraternity. It is the assurance that all members will have access to opportunities, the network, resources, and supports—not equally, but based on where they are and where they want to go. For example, two members may have the same goal, but one of those members might need additional support in order to reach that goal. We aim to make sure everyone gets what they need. We will do this by:

1. Ensuring that the “mic” in our meetings, programs, and social events is not dominated by cis men.
2. Reviewing current pathways for leadership.

### **Leverage Professional Development to Engage in DEI Work**

Professional development refers to the set of tools, resources, and training that the fraternity makes available for members to improve on member-related skills and effectiveness. These resources allow members to further their knowledge and practice. Sometimes, these resources may introduce transferable skills that members can apply beyond the fraternity. We aim to use professional development as a way to provide members with opportunities to engage in DEI work. Here’s how:

1. We will establish an onboarding process for new members after induction that prioritizes community building.
2. We will provide coaching for staff members who occupy community-facing roles (i.e. regional staff, the Director of Membership, the Director of Communications).
3. We will provide monthly communication around our DEI initiatives.
4. We will provide semi-annual cultural competency workshops that will be mandatory for all staff members.



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### Phase Two | Advocate

#### **Build a Resource Hub**

A resource hub is a dedicated center for content to be accessed by members and community members. It's a key point of engagement, providing useful documents, links, and presentations. We are committed to making our fraternity website a dedicated hub of information and resources for members, supporters, potential members, and community members accessing our website for the first time. Here's how we plan to educate through our website:

1. We will share commentary on existing DEI-related research, its implications, and its implementation in Greek organizations.
2. We will share resources on civic engagement opportunities for allies and activists.

#### **Showcase the Work**

Any achievement in diversity, equity, and inclusion work is an achievement for anyone engaged in this work in some capacity. We believe DEI-related successes need to be showcased on multimedia platforms to highlight progress and the benefits of our collective work.

1. We will use our digital and social media platforms to highlight internal and external DEI-related successes.
2. We will publicly share our DEI journey and practice transparency.

#### **Community Engagement**

Community engagement refers to our commitment to working with identified groups of people outside of the fraternity. The goal of this work is to identify and address issues affecting the well-being of those people. We believe, with the support of our full agency, this level of engagement will help us mobilize resources, influence systems, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices. We plan to start this work by:

1. Actively surveying, interviewing, and collaborating with diverse groups and individuals.
2. Inviting marginalized community members to share our platforms by attending, co-hosting, and volunteering at our events.

#### **Invite Storytelling**

Our Portraits series has taught us that good storytelling connects an audience with another person. Storytelling naturally helps us be in sync with other people. So, when communication works, we align with one another—creating space for understanding, inspiration, assurance, and healing. To begin inviting more storytelling:

1. We will expand the Portraits series by hosting "Fireside Chats" to give members and community members the opportunity to tell their stories.



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### Phase Three | Act

#### **Create and Hold Space**

Being an inclusive fraternity means that we must make space for our most marginalized members so that they are empowered to be leaders of the change. We recognize that making and holding space for our members is a key component in addressing systems of oppression within and outside of the fraternity. Space holding requires the fraternity to be willing to step aside so that our most marginalized members can make their own choices with the fraternity nearby to offer unconditional support and guidance when needed. We intend to begin the process of creating and holding space by:

1. Creating affinity groups for marginalized gender and sexuality groups.
2. Creating a DEI committee that evaluates, makes suggestions for and implements culturally competent policy changes.

#### **Fund**

We recognize that our efforts in this work will be restricted without financial support. Proper funding will support our professional development and advocacy initiatives. Here's how we intend to fund our DEI work:

- We will create a budget for our DEI work beginning FY21.
- We will create an arts and education fund for transgender youth beginning FY22.

#### **Protect Our Youth**

In 2017, the Trump administration revoked federal guidance that directed schools to allow youth to use restrooms aligned with their gender identity. We believe the lack of policies to protect queer youth in schools, shelters, and public facilities sends a dangerous message about inclusion and equity. We intend to play our own part in protecting queer youth by:

- Establishing a mentorship program for queer youth.
- Providing a resource bank with useful information for marginalized groups.
- Re-launching the Am I Blue Project.

#### **Build a Coalition**

Forming coalitions around united issues serve in the best interest of the fraternity. If we are able to form coalitions with other fraternities and sororities, we will be able to combine our resources to be more effective DEI practitioners and have a greater impact for the benefit of the queer community. We seek to form coalitions by:

1. Inviting other fraternities and sororities to engage in this work, which includes sharing resources.
2. Designing a toolkit of Greek life best practices.
3. Publicly releasing our fraternity's guide to DEI and the lessons we learn throughout our journey.
4. Increasing and deepening partnerships that could lead to the representation of the full queer spectrum.