

# Statement of Values on Diversity and Inclusion

## Diversity and Inclusion

We define diversity as the aspects of identity that differ between individuals. These aspects can include disability and different ability, education, gender identity and gender expression, national identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, but diversity is not limited to these characteristics alone.

We define inclusion as an environment that affirms the essence of all individuals. An inclusive environment is one where all people feel engaged, supported, and empowered.

## Why do diversity and inclusion matter?

Samuel Eells founded the Alpha Delta Phi Society in the early 1830s as the Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity, and dedicated it to the cultivation of a holistic “union for intellectual and literary purposes, and at the same time maintain the integrity of youthful character.” However, the benefits of such a union were exclusive to those who attended college in this era—a group of predominantly affluent, white men. We took a considerable step forward in 1992 when we split from the Fraternity to become a gender-inclusive organization. In doing so, we laid the foundation for a new kind of Greek-letter organization, rooted in a culture of inclusion, which has allowed us to remain active and relevant on college campuses today.

Diversity and inclusion are the cornerstones on which we build some of the fundamental components of the Alpha Delta Phi Society experience. We foster intellectual growth by enabling people to learn from and surround themselves with a diverse set of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. We build a supportive community through an inclusive atmosphere that promotes the idea that every person should be heard and valued. And, we encourage our members to contribute their best to our organization by creating an environment where those who participate feel included, respected, and engaged.

Diversity, as a shared value, and inclusion, as a shared approach, allow us to thrive in the present and sustain us through the changing political, social, and economic times of the future. By dedicating ourselves to the imperatives of diversity and inclusion, we honor Samuel Eells’ original vision for a Society that is “national and universal in its adaptations”, while recontextualizing it to redefine what it means to be a Greek-letter organization in the modern world.

## Our Principles of Diversity and Inclusion

**Embody Siblinghood:** Our Society is built on the bonds that we develop among all of our members. Accordingly, we aim to welcome every individual of our Society with affirmation and love, and to proactively address individual barriers to entry so that each member can pursue their own ideal of membership. In doing so, we reaffirm our Society-wide ideals of commitment, respect, caring, and trust.

**Educate Ourselves:** As our organization defines itself by continuous growth and self-improvement, we hold ourselves as individuals to the same standard. We do not, and cannot, know everything; we actively acknowledge the gaps in our awareness, and educate ourselves to fill in these gaps.

**Prioritize Communication:** In order to foster an environment in which all of our members are able to participate, we prioritize effective communication practices. As individuals, we strive to use inclusive

language in all mediums, spoken, written, or otherwise; respond respectfully, even in dissent; and actively seek out other voices, especially those that have been marginalized.

**Curb Power Dynamics:** Power dynamics are the visible and invisible imbalances of authority or influence between individuals or groups. We acknowledge that there are inherent power dynamics built into our formal organizational structure as well as our informal interactions. We believe that it is the burden of those who benefit from that power to utilize inclusive practices to listen to, and make space for, the voices of those without it.

**Exceed Standards:** We understand that laws and regulations, at the college/university, local, state, and federal levels, serve merely as starting points for our behavior — however, the law is the floor, not the ceiling. We do not condone intolerance at any level.

**Improve Constantly:** Committing ourselves to a diverse and inclusive society means being willing to resist complacency, and to take ownership of the direction in which we grow as an organization. We recognize that we must be wary of homogeneity of opinion, identity, or expression. Accordingly, we aim to actively and deliberately seek out diversity in its many forms.

**Maintain Transparency:** Transparency is the foundation on which we build an atmosphere of inclusion. It enables us to engage all our members, to transcend the barriers within our organization, and to earnestly reflect on our practices. When we close ourselves to observation, we close ourselves to criticism and improvement. We believe in our responsibility to be transparent in our actions, our dialogues, and our processes.

**Demand Accountability:** We work deliberately to keep our siblings accountable for upholding our mission and principles of diversity and inclusion. We seek both to identify our shortcomings through self-reflection and to acknowledge critical feedback from any and all members of the Society. Identification and acknowledgement are merely the first steps before taking intentional, specific actions to improve ourselves both individually and collectively.

## **Our Charge**

**Redefining what it means to be a Greek-letter organization demands us to be bold.** Diversity and inclusion are the foundation of our mission; they enable the fulfillment of every facet of our vision. A diverse Society and inclusive practices allow each and every one of us to fully realize the ideals of siblinghood.

**We pledge ourselves to actively pursue these ideals and these principles, with our words and with our actions, in our structures and in our pursuits, as colleagues and as siblings.**