

A field of yellow Black-eyed Susans in the foreground with a modern building in the background.

*Listening Sessions with
Fraternity and Sorority
Life Students
Spring and Fall 2020*

Project Purpose

As a campus, there is presently and historically a high rate of high-risk alcohol use. According to National College Health Assessment Data, University of Iowa students sit far above the National average for high-risk drinking behaviors. Fraternity and Sorority Life students are one of several high-risk groups on campus. Dedicated staff, faculty, students, and administration have worked over the last decade with the Fraternity and Sorority Life community to shift the trend downward. Moving forward, the Harm Reduction team would like to take a Community Based Participatory approach to alcohol use interventions with Fraternity and Sorority Life students. Listening Sessions are a first steps in taking that approach. The Listening sessions were focus groups held with individual Chapters. The Listening Sessions were facilitated by staff members and student employees. The goals of these listening sessions include:



Engage with students at all leadership levels of Fraternity and Sorority Life



Break down communication barriers between student leaders, their peers, and staff



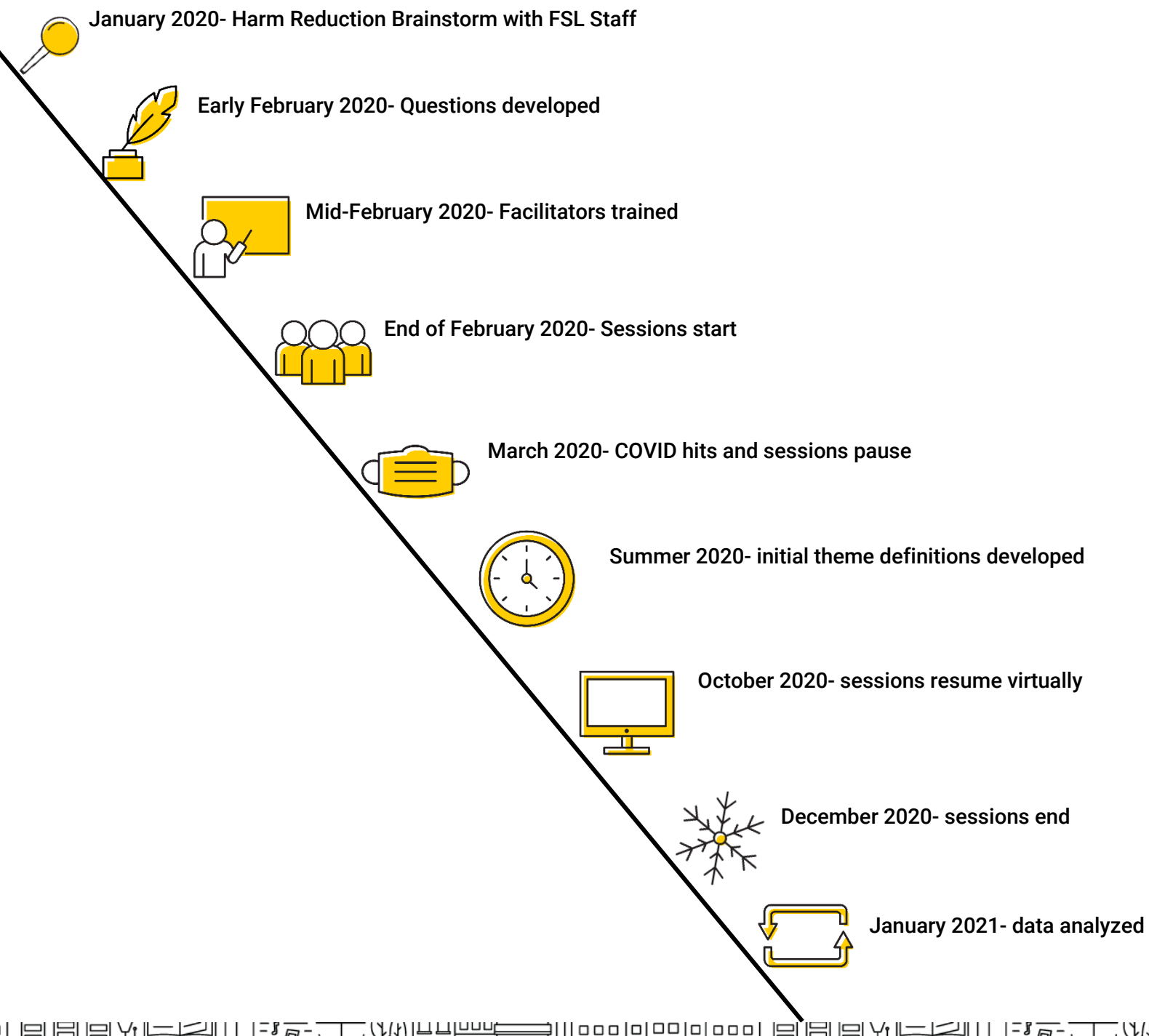
Empower students to play an active role in harm reduction work



Identify next steps for collaborative harm reduction work between students and staff



Timeline



Procedures

- Chapters and councils were contacted by FSL staff to schedule sessions
- Facilitators were trained in basic interviewing skills
- Each session was divided into groups based on chapter size
 - Each group had a facilitator and a note taker if a note taker was available
- After each session, note takers went through their notes to ensure legibility
- Facilitators reflected on how sessions went, student engagement, issues, etc.
- Notes were stored in a OneDrive folder
- Data was entered by Student Involvement Ambassadors
- Responses were coded by select staff and students
- Clarification in notes was sought when necessary

Facilitators

Alicia Aguiar- *Assessment, Improvement, and Research*

Danielle Barefoot- *Residence Education*

Steph Beecher- *Student Wellness*

Michael Berger- *Student Involvement Ambassador*

Meghan Bullard- *Fraternity and Sorority Life*

Mara Cheney- *Well-being and Harm Reduction*

Anita Cory- *Office of Student Accountability*

Becca Don- *Student Wellness*

Karen Grajczyk- *Student Wellness*

Nikki Hodous- *Student Care and Assistance*

Angela Ibrahim-Olin- *Office of Student Accountability*

Laurynn King- *Student Engagement and Campus Programs*

ShirDonna Lawrence- *Fraternity and Sorority Life*

Danielle Martinez- *Academic Success and Retention*

Olivia Murphy- *Fraternity and Sorority Life*

Patrick Rossman- *Student Wellness*

Eric Rossow- *Dean of Students*

McKenzie Sauer- *Fraternity and Sorority Life*

Anna Soergel- *Student Engagement and Campus Programs*

Caleb Smith- *Fraternity and Sorority Life*

Pearl Tate- *Student Involvement Ambassador*

Tanya Villhauer- *Well-being and Harm Reduction*

Trish Welter- *Student Wellness*

Olivia Westemeier- *Student Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct*

Becky Wilson- *Residence Education*

Abbie Williams-Yee- *Student Involvement Ambassador*



Questions Asked

Questions were vetted with Fraternity and Sorority Life staff, as well as the campus partners who facilitated the listening sessions:

1. Why did you join your organization?
 - a. What were you hoping to get out of your experience in FSL?
 - b. When you went through recruitment, how important was learning about your chapter's values?
2. Tell us about your experiences and the importance of the social aspect of being involved in your organization?
 - a. Note- this includes alcohol use, tell students it's ok to talk about alcohol use
 - b. We are not just talking about formal/registered events. Talk about informal gatherings with your group
3. Tell us about the environments or situations in which alcohol is present. Do you think that your current environment when consuming alcohol is healthy or unhealthy?
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. Can you share the difference between environments you feel healthy and safe vs. environments in which you don't? (if there is a time you feel unsafe)
4. When I say alcohol harm reduction, what does that mean to you?
 - a. What do you know about Alcohol Harm Reduction efforts across campus and within the FSL community?
 - b. Potential prompts- what excites you? Concerns you?
5. How do you envision staff and students working together to continue to build a safer environment around alcohol?
 - a. If you could build the perfect partnership, what would it look like?



Participants

Chapters from all four councils participated in listening sessions. Each council's Executive board was met with in addition to meeting with individual chapters. The number of chapters within each council that we were able to engage with include:

IOWA

Fraternity and Sorority Life
National Pan-Hellenic Council



IOWA

Fraternity and Sorority Life
Interfraternity Council



IOWA

Fraternity and Sorority Life
Multicultural Greek Council



IOWA

Fraternity and Sorority Life
Panhellenic Council



Statistically, this is not a representative sample of each council, nor the community. COVID impacted our ability to meet with all the chapters. We still find the information gained to be a valuable first step in collaboratively moving forward with our work.



Results

Question 1: Why did you join your organization?

Top Three Responses:



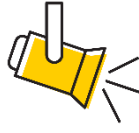
40% of students reported joining to find social support within a group



"I am from Iowa and knew a lot of people already, but I thought the sorority would help me branch out and get to know new people that I didn't already know."



16% of students reported joining because they had family members or friends who had been involved in Fraternity and Sorority Life



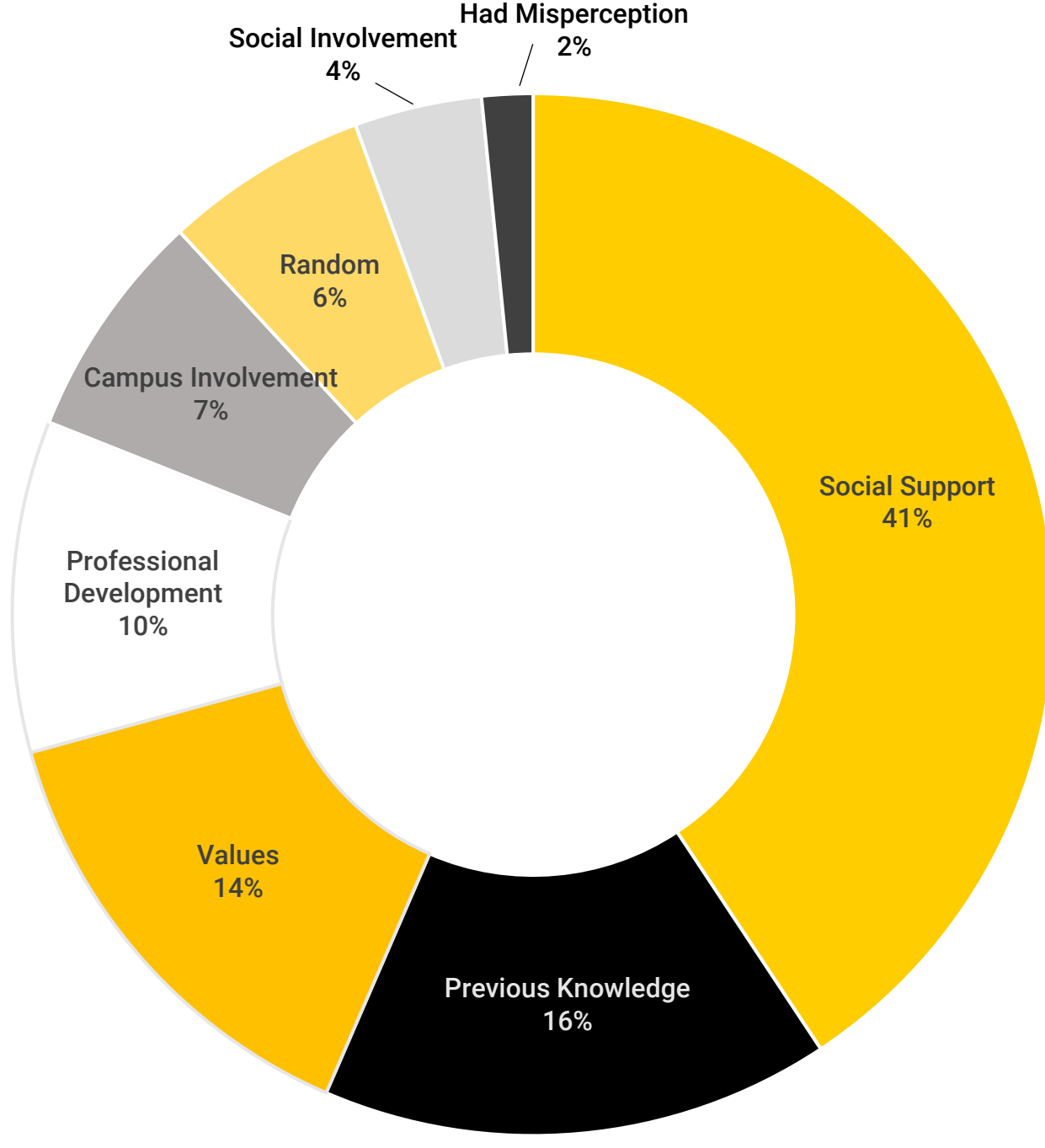
14% of students reported joining because they met individuals during recruitment who shared their values

Top responses were consistent across all four councils



Question 1: Why did you join your organization?

All Responses:



Question 1: Why did you join your organization?

Responses by Council:

Responses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Social Support	Social Support	Social Support	Social Support
Values	Values	Values	Professional Development
	Previous Knowledge	Previous Knowledge	Previous Knowledge
	Social Involvement	Misperception	Values
	Professional Development		Campus Involvement
	Random		Social Involvement
	Campus Involvement		

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Question 1a: What were you hoping to get out of your experience?

Top Three Responses:



47% of students reported hoping to find social support within a group



"I was looking for opportunities to volunteer and build connections related to my major [professionally]."



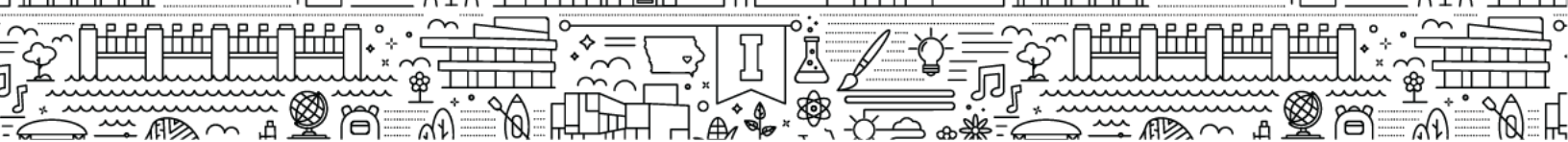
22% of students reported hoping to experience the socialization aspect of the organization



19% of students reported hoping to experience professional development in their organization

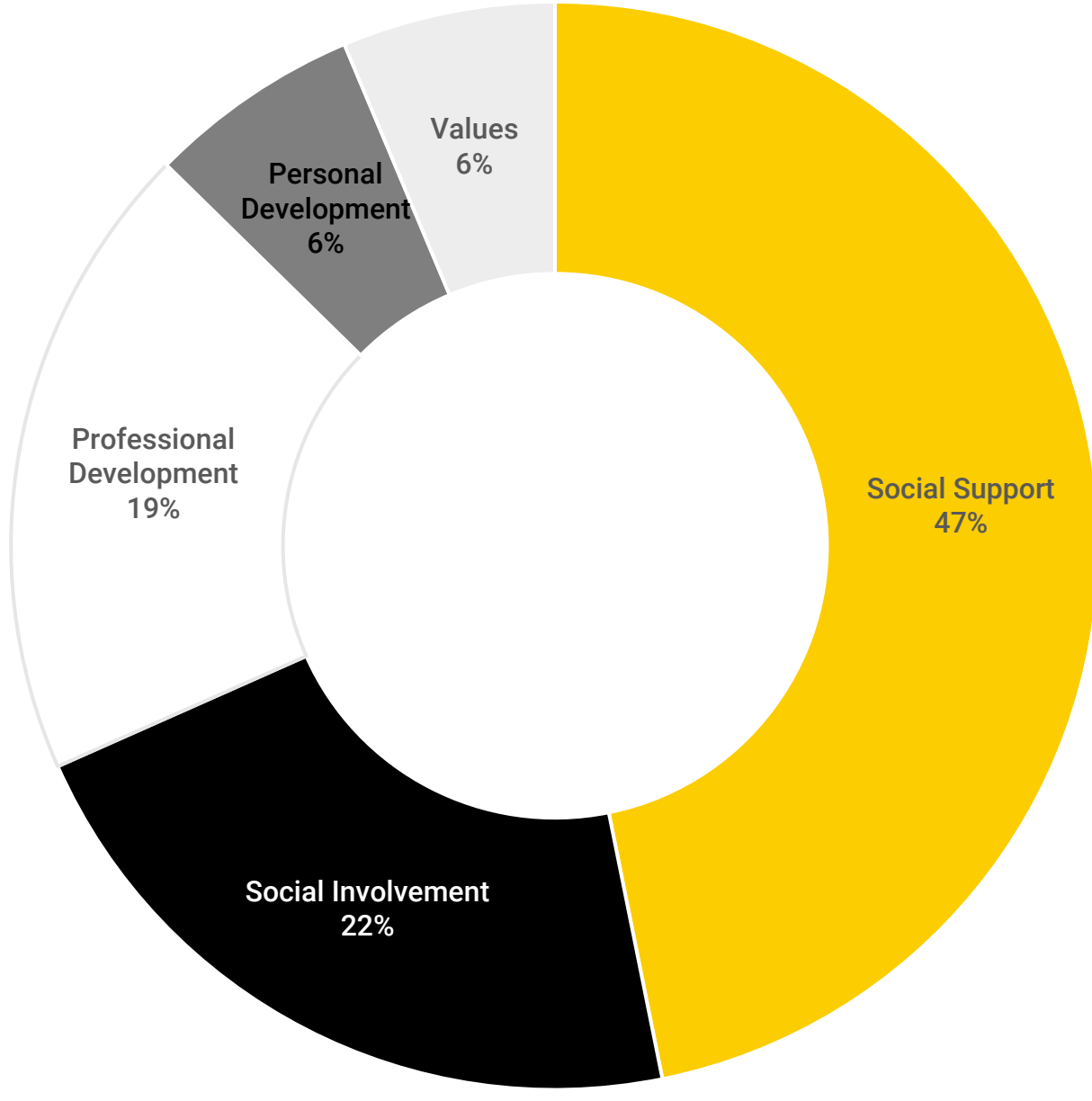
Top response by council:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Social Support
Interfraternity Council	Social Support
Multicultural Greek Council	Personal Development
Panhellenic Council	Social Support



Question 1a: What were you hoping to get?

All Responses:



Question 1a: What were you hoping to get?

Responses by Council:

Reponses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Social Support	Social Support	Personal Development	Social Support
Values	Social Involvement	Social Support	Professional Development
	Values	Social Involvement	Social Involvement
		Professional Development	Personal Development
		Values	Values
			Random

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Question 1b: When you went through recruitment, how important was learning about your chapter's values?

Top Three Responses:



25% of students shared that they joined their organization specifically because they experienced shared values with the current members



"Expectations of how to act were clear, be respectful to all people."



15% of students shared examples of witnessing chapter values after joining the organization



Three responses were tied at 11% of responses indicating that students didn't see values as important, shared that the chapters have values but didn't identify what they were, or gave their personal perception of the chapter's values

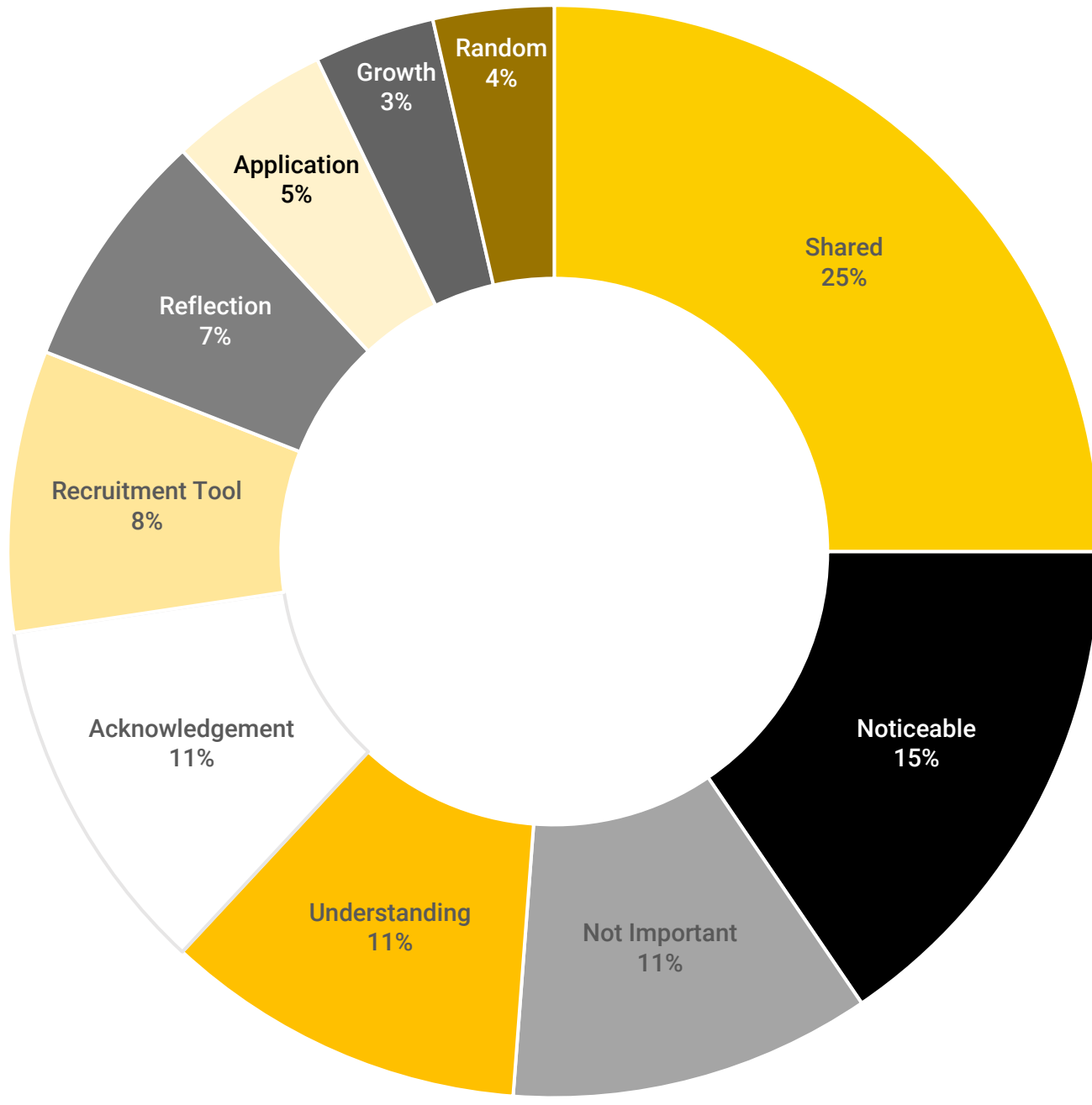
Top response by council:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Shared Values
Interfraternity Council	Shared Values
Multicultural Greek Council	Acknowledgement of Values
Panhellenic Council	Shared Values



Question 1b: Importance of values during recruitment

All Responses:



Question 1b: Importance of values during recruitment

Responses by Council:

Reponses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Shared Values	Shared Values	Acknowledgement of Values	Shared Values
Understanding Values	Noticeable Values	Application of Values	Noticeable Values
Application of Values	Reflection	Growth	Recruitment Tool
Growth	Acknowledgement of Values	Recruitment Tool	Reflection
	Understanding Values	Shared Values	Acknowledgement of Values
	Not Important		Random
	Application of Values		
	Recruitment Tool		
	Random		

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Question 2: Tell us about your experiences and the importance of the social aspect of being involved in your organization.

Top Three Responses:



43% of students described ways they connected with chapter or community members in day-to-day life



"Philanthropy events were social due to the set up and tear down - you do get to know people because you're working with people you may not know as well."



16% of students shared about socialization with alcohol occurring within their chapter and across the community



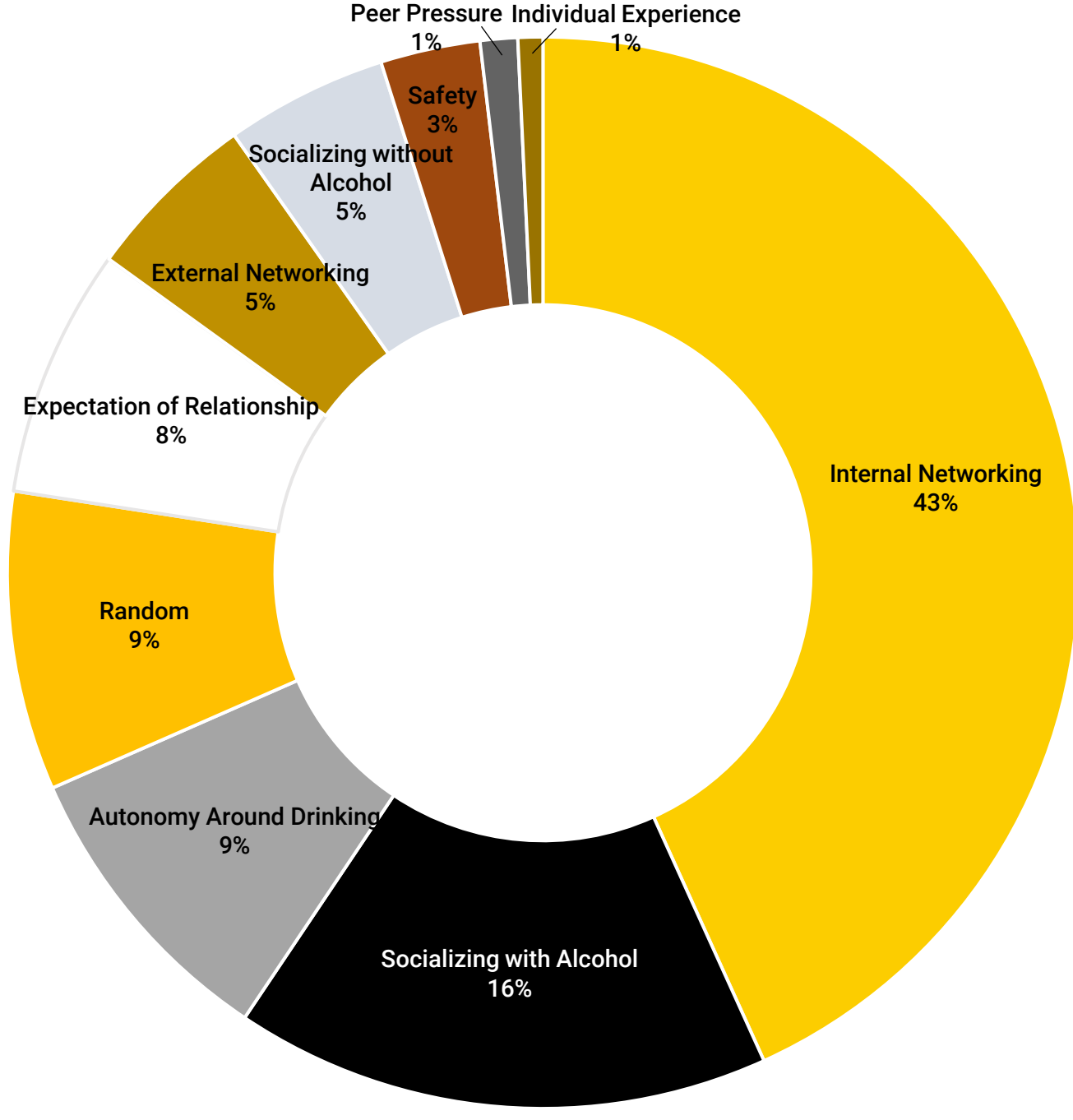
9% of students described strong self-efficacy around choosing not to drink

Top responses were consistent across all four councils



Question 2: Experience of the social aspect

All Responses:



Question 2: Experience of the social aspect

Responses by Council:

Reponses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Internal Networking	Internal Networking	Internal Networking	Internal Networking
Random	Socializing with Alcohol	Socializing without Alcohol	Socializing with Alcohol
Expectation of Relationships	Random	Socializing with Alcohol	Autonomy around Drinking
Autonomy around Drinking	External Networking	Expectation of Relationships	Expectation of Relationships
External Networking	Socializing without Alcohol	Random	Random
	Autonomy around Drinking	Autonomy around Drinking	External Networking
	Individual Experience		Safety
			Socializing without Alcohol
			Peer Pressure
			Individual Experience

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Question 3: Do you think that your current environment when consuming alcohol is healthy or unhealthy?

Top Three Responses:



31% of students described ways in which they perceived themselves to be safe or unsafe



"Nothing is good when you don't know what to expect or what the norm is, you need to know what is out of the norm. Talking to the older girls and learning what should and should not happen [is important]."



21% of students shared ways that they look out for their friends and fellow FSL community members, described a culture of care



10% of students shared that they feel the culture around drinking within the FSL community is unhealthy



A note on the theme of being safe or unsafe:

- Students identified the role of alcohol in sexual misconduct,
- Students described the importance of relationships as a factor in feeling safe or unsafe
- Students identified that they drink safely or abstain from drinking
- Students described ways they have watched others participate in unsafe behaviors

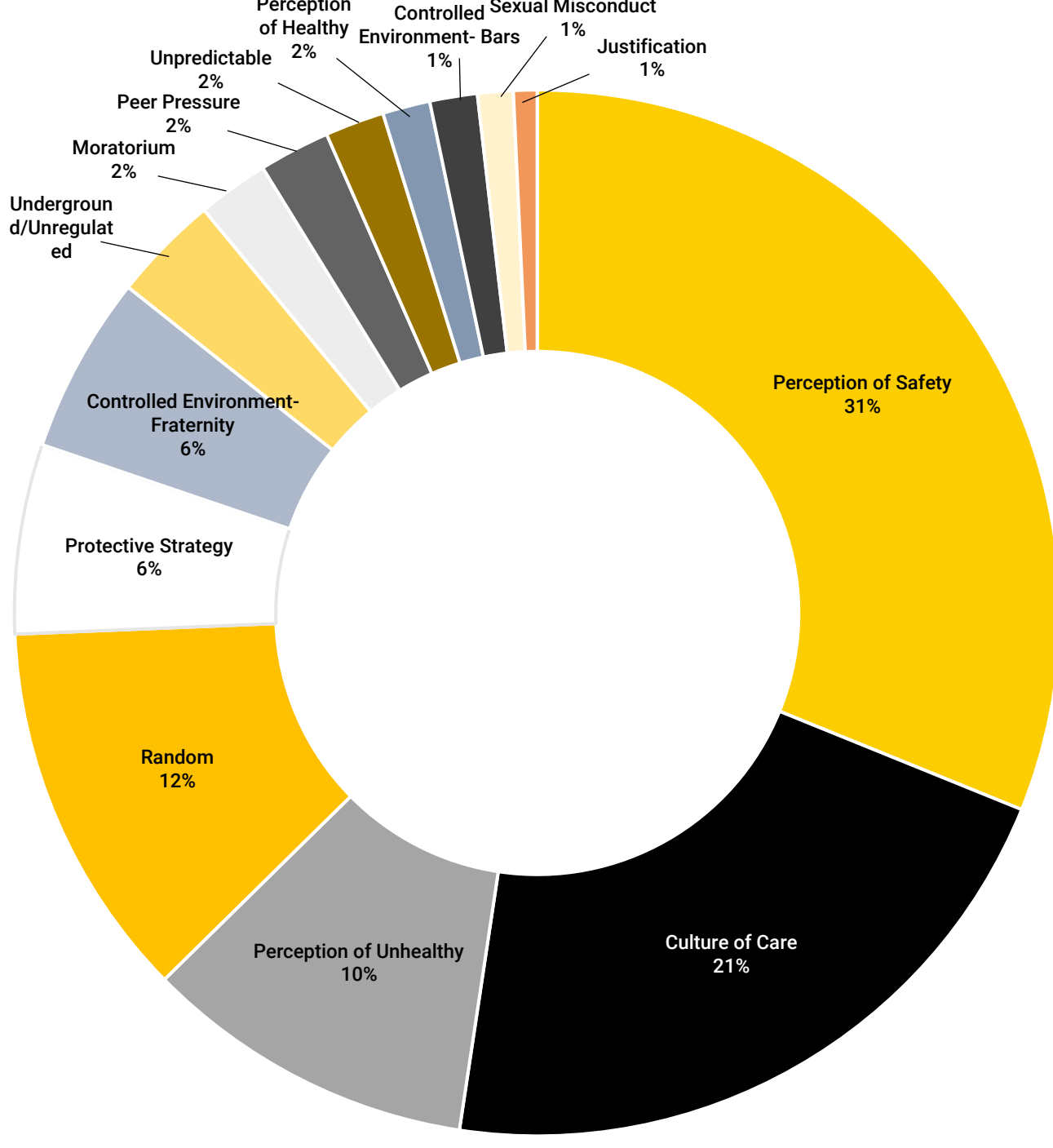
Top response by council:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Safety
Interfraternity Council	Safety
Multicultural Greek Council	Culture of Care
Panhellenic Council	Safety



Question 3: Healthy or Unhealthy Environment

All Responses:



Question 3: Healthy or Unhealthy Environment

Responses by Council:

Reponses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Safety	Safety	Culture of Care	Safety
Culture of Care	Culture of Care	Perception of Unhealthy	Culture of Care
Peer Pressure	Controlled Environment-Fraternity House	Random	Perception of Unhealthy
	Random	Perception of Safety	Random
	Unpredictable	Protective Strategy	Protective Strategy
	Protective Strategy	Peer Pressure	Controlled Environment-Fraternity
	Underground/Unregulated		Underground/Unregulated
	Justification		Moratorium
	Perception of Safety		Controlled Environment-Bars
	Moratorium		Peer Pressure
			Sexual Misconduct
			Unpredictable
			Perception of Healthy

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Question 4: When I say Alcohol Harm Reduction, what does that mean to you?

Top Three Responses:



20% of students shared that they think Alcohol Harm Reduction is about making things safer and educating people



18% of students gave the Moratorium as an example of their main understanding of Alcohol Harm Reduction



14% of students gave educational experiences as an example of their understanding of Alcohol Harm Reduction



A note on the Moratorium:

- Students shared a desire to be more engaged in the decision-making process around alcohol and events policy
- Students shared frustration over a lack of communication and centralized information
- Students shared concern that the moratorium and not having registered events makes things less safe



"Moratorium may or may not have changed? It's unknown, lack of clarity in terms of which steps to take to have events. When looking for information, are redirected from FSL office to multiple people."

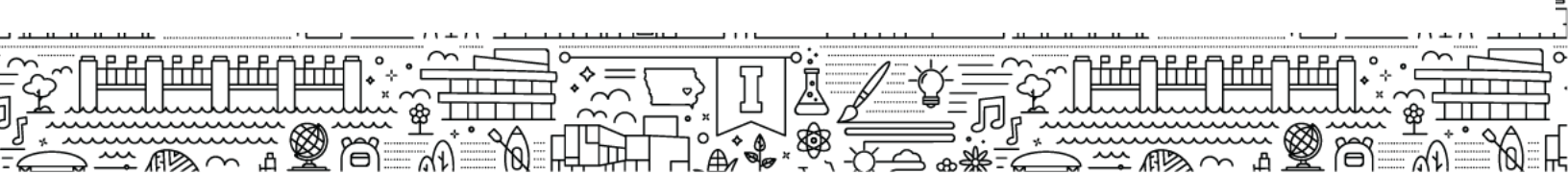
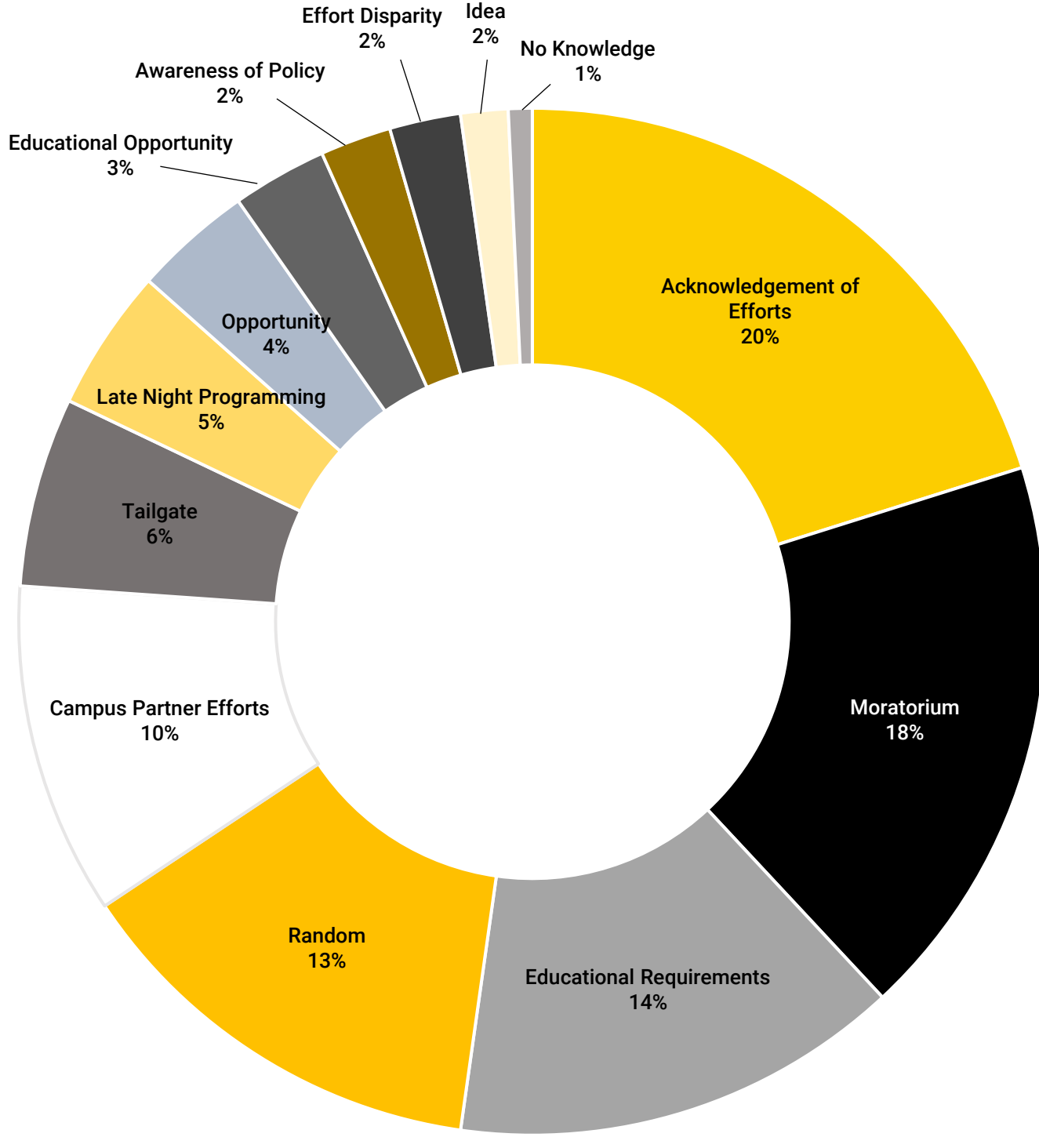
Top response by council:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Safety and Education
Interfraternity Council	Moratorium
Multicultural Greek Council	Safety and Education
Panhellenic Council	Safety and Education



Question 4: Meaning of Alcohol Harm Reduction

All Responses:



Question 4: Meaning of Alcohol Harm Reduction

Responses by Council:

Reponses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Safety and Education	Moratorium	Safety and Education	Safety and Education
Campus Partner Efforts	Educational Requirements	Late Night Programming	Educational Requirements
Late Night Programming	Safety and Education	Effort Disparity	Campus Partner Efforts
Educational Opportunity	Random	Educational Opportunity	Educational Opportunity
Educational Requirements	Campus Partner Efforts	Campus Partner Efforts	Random
	Tailgate	Random	Moratorium
	Educational Opportunity		Late Night Programming
	Awareness of Policy		Tailgate
	No Knowledge		Idea
	Effort Disparity		Effort Disparity
	Late Night Programming		Idea
			Awareness of Policy

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Question 5: How do you envision staff and students working together to continue to build a safer environment around alcohol?

Top Three Responses:



23% of students described an ideal relationship where they feel supported in learning from their mistakes versus simply feeling punished



"For underclassmen, they just think, 'this sucks,' they don't know why the rules we have now are in place."



16% of students expressed a desire for open communication between students and staff to communicate historical and current context around decisions (particularly around sanctions)



12% of students expressed a desire for more education and/or improving upon the current education provided



The top three responses from NPHC were evenly split. Their other top response was highlighting differences between managing larger versus smaller organizations

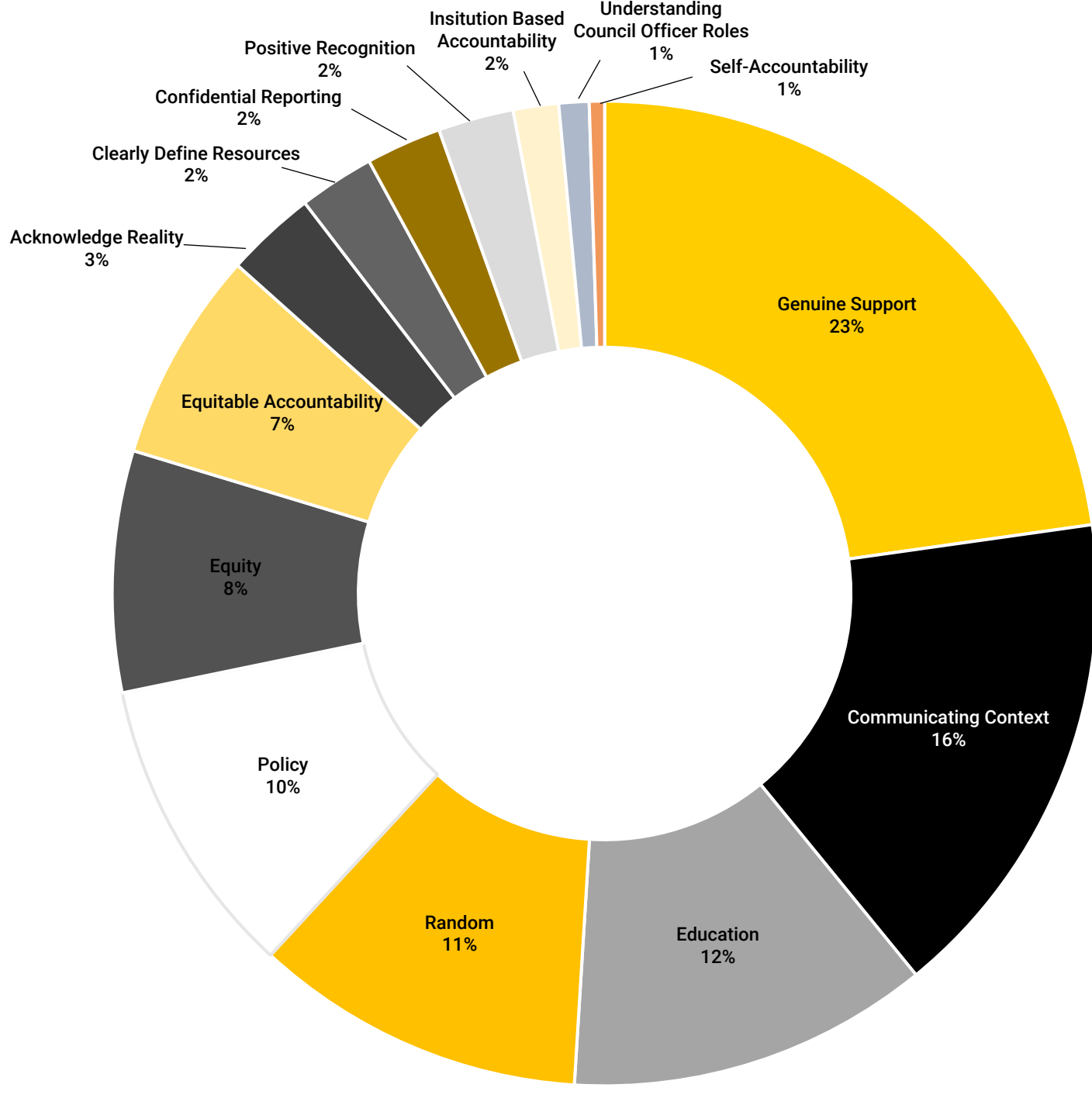
Top response by council:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	See Note
Interfraternity Council	Support
Multicultural Greek Council	Context
Panhellenic Council	Support



Question 5: Describe your Ideal Partnership

All Responses:



Question 5: Describe your Ideal Partnership

Responses by Council:

Reponses are listed in order from most responses to fewest, by council.
Please see the Appendix for code definitions:

National Pan-Hellenic Council	Interfraternity Council	Multicultural Greek Council	Panhellenic Council
Random	Genuine Support	Communicating Context	Genuine Support
Self-Accountability	Policy	Equitable Accountability	Communicating Context
Institution-Based Accountability	Random	Equity	Education
Communicating Context	Communicating Context	Random	Equitable Accountability
Education	Education	Acknowledge Reality	Equity
Confidential Reporting	Equity	Clearly Define Resources	Policy
	Equitable Accountability	Genuine Support	Random
	Positive Recognition		Institution-Based Accountability
	Acknowledge Reality		Clearly Define Resources
	Confidential Reporting		Acknowledge Reality
	Self-Accountability		Confidential Reporting
			Positive Recognition
			Understanding Council Officer Roles
			Self-Accountability

*Random indicates that the responses given did not answer the question asked and could not be later categorized.



Summary of Findings



Students are joining their organizations to find social support during their time at the University of Iowa

Students can identify what safe and unsafe situations are regarding alcohol and its relationship to other behaviors



Experiencing shared values during recruitment is a key factor for students to join their specific organization

Students identify drinking behaviors within their community to be unhealthy more often than healthy



Alcohol does play a role in the social aspect of organizations; however, it is second to forming bonds through the day-to-day experiences of life on campus

A foundational understanding of Alcohol Harm Reduction exists, however there is room to expand types of interventions and how they can impact the FSL community



The foundation exists for building a culture of care within the FSL community

When it comes to misconduct and sanctions, students feel punished and instead desire a growth mindset approach to learning from their mistakes



Students have a desire for a more active role in all aspects of Alcohol Harm Reduction work

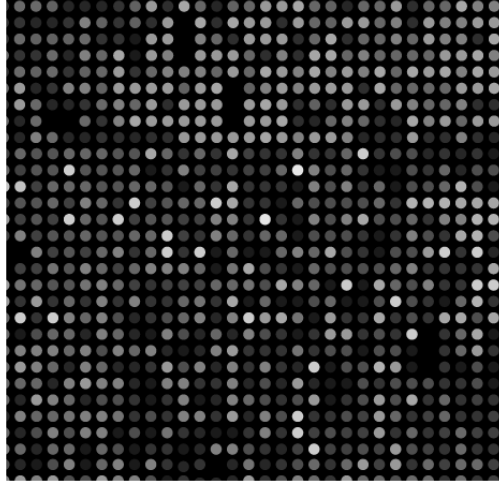


Summary of findings

Differences Between Councils

The top responses of each council were examined separately to understand differences in needs moving forward. Differences were found between the councils for three out of six total questions. Differences are highlighted in gold:

Council	1	1a	2	3	4	5
National Pan-Hellenic Council	Social Support	Social Support	Internal networking	Safety	Safety and Education	Even split, no top response
Interfraternity Council	Social Support	Social Support	Internal Networking	Safety	Moratorium	Support
Multicultural Greek Council	Social Support	Personal Development	Internal Networking	Culture of Care	Safety and Education	Context
Panhellenic Council	Social Support	Social Support	Internal Networking	Safety	Safety and Education	Support



Overwhelmingly, students expressed appreciation for the direct connection with staff members. Students also shared their appreciation that space was held for their individual and collective voices to be heard. It is recommended to utilize this type of engagement with this group whenever reasonable. This will be mutually beneficial for students and staff alike.



Recommended Next Steps



Share out results with facilitators and other relevant campus and community partners

Conduct Listening Sessions again once back on campus to obtain a statistically representative sample of the Fraternity and Sorority community



Share out results with the Fraternity and Sorority Life Community

Repeat Listening Sessions every three years to keep data current and have touchpoints with all new members at least once



Collaboratively identify next steps in Alcohol Harm Reduction with Fraternity and Sorority Life community leaders and members

Discontinue the “one size fits all” approach to Alcohol Harm Reduction between each Council, instead tailor programming to each council’s specific needs and capacities



Tell us about your experiences and the importance of the social aspect of being involved in your organization.

- Autonomy around drinking – did not let peer pressure influence choices about drinking
- Expectation of Relationship – perception of chapter relationships when joining
- External Networking – meeting/forming relationships with other chapters
- Individual Experience – gave personal example of their social experience in FSL
- Internal Networking – bonding with other chapter members/specific experiences
- Non-alcohol socializing – how they socialize without alcohol
- Peer pressure – mentions peer pressure
- Random- response did not answer question
- Safety – any protection strategies when going out and drinking
- Socializing with alcohol – alcohol present at social gatherings

Do you think that your current environment when consuming alcohol is healthy or unhealthy?

- Controlled Environment- fraternity- felt safer drinking in fraternity houses where relationships already exist
- Controlled Environment- bars- felt safer drinking in a bar where more people are around
- Culture of Care- described ways they and their peers look out for each other
- Justification- justified party behavior (i.e. it's college this is what we do)
- Moratorium/sanctions- cited anxiety, confusion, or frustration
- Peer Pressure- described feeling pressured to drink
- Perceptions of healthy – specifically states healthy in response
- Perceptions of unhealthy – specifically states unhealthy in response
- Perception of safety- instances/behavior patterns that increase or decrease safety
- Protective strategy- described using evidence-based protective strategies when drinking
- Sexual Misconduct- mention where this was a concern (crowded places, such as bars)
- Underground/unregulated- have to sneak/hide parties
- Unpredictable- they feel it depends on the situation
- Random- response did not answer question



When I say Alcohol Harm Reduction, what does that mean to you?

- Campus Partner Efforts- gave example of alcohol harm reduction efforts on campus
- Educational Requirements- alcohol harm reduction educationals/needed improvements
- Late Night Programming- mentioned Late Night Programming/ social spaces without alcohol
- Moratorium –policies about social gatherings with alcohol and/or specifically the moratorium
- Tailgate – mentions the restrictions put on tailgates
- Acknowledgement of AHR Efforts – purpose of making the culture around drinking safer/educating about safer drinking habits
- Random – response did not answer question
- Educational Opportunity –wanted more alcohol harm reduction education or mentioned a drinking misconception
- AHR Idea – give an AHR recommendation
- Opportunity for AHR – gave an example as to why AHR efforts are important
- Awareness of Policy – gives an example of current campus alcohol policies
- Effort Disparity – mentioned unfair expectations between FSL councils/ between FSL organizations and other student organizations
- No knowledge of AHR – mention they don't know of any alcohol harm reduction efforts

Ideal Partnership

- Acknowledging Reality– university should recognize that students will drink alcohol and not try to stop it
- Clearly define resources –a safe and known place/person for students to go to with questions/concern about policies
- Communicating Context – opening the conversation so students are involved and/or being transparent with organizations about punishments/sanctions
- Confidential Reporting –a resource where students can report incidences anonymously
- Education – increase educational opportunities /improve current educational material
- Equitable Accountability – improve how the university handles alcohol related issues. Every chapter should not be punished for the actions of one
- Equity – recognizing the FSL councils are different and view drinking behaviors differently. Adapt AHR efforts to fit the target audience.
- Genuine Support – support from the university and creating policies/interventions where student organizations can learn from their mistakes
- Institution based Accountability – university's responsibility to professionally/ appropriately address alcohol related issues
- Policy – mentions alcohol related policies
- Positive Recognition – recognize the good things that come from the FSL community
- Random- response did not answer question
- Self-Accountability – admit students' role in shaping healthier culture around drinking
- Understanding Council Officers roles – recognize the responsibilities or- and value in-council officers

