

Subject: AILG Accreditation Report– FY 2006
 From: Jim Bueche, '62, Vice Chair AILG 2006

This report will review the purpose, process, roles and accomplishments since the report at the September 21, 2005 Plenary meeting. Some of it repeats the information provided to the alumni and undergraduate officer(s) who are the focus point for obtaining and providing the information, and participate along with the visiting committee members (VC) who are also members of MIT house corporations and the AILG.

First I want to thank those of you who last year agreed to help support the testing and refinement of this process for accreditation of the FSILGs at MIT. The goals of the process have been discussed, refined and approved by the AILG plenary members and the Dean for Student Life, Dean Larry Benedict. I also want to give credit for the initial Spring 2005 efforts of the Beta 1 trial with Theta Delta Chi and with Student House, both of which resulted in a favorable finding for recommending accreditation.

As announced at the session last year, the information gathered and views exchanged were found useful, however the process was not scaleable when taking into account alumni and undergraduate preparation time, VC staffing, and school calendar constraints. I proposed to this group a plan to maintain the important metrics while limiting the items and time needed to find and fill out the information form, and also condense visiting committee sessions by keeping them to under 2 hours thereby limiting the demands on VCs. Further, I asked for volunteers to help test and refine this concept and what is now called the BasicDataForm, currently at version jb7c, and indicated that we would run a series of Beta 2 tests with their help. I will report on these houses below, but first I'd like to include the information that was given to each participating team.

Introduction Info

The approach is to use an initial core of the metrics, and will be supportive of two initiatives for this year, SLI (Safety, Licensing and Inspection) and RRI, (Recruiting and Retention Initiative). It will base itself on a one day commitment by visiting committee volunteers but will reach multiple houses during that day. Also it will provide an initial base of data and experience for a set of metrics and visits on a periodic basis to maintain an accredited status.

It is important to emphasize that Accreditation -

- is NOT meant to replace monitoring and daily/weekly/monthly oversight
- is NOT judicial nor punitive
- does NOT directly include interventions based on the findings

It is a process that will help your alumni house corporation and undergraduate chapter look at yourselves, and assess and evaluate where you are and where you are going. It will help houses/chapters identify problems with financial, governance, member development, and behavior issues that left unaddressed will threaten the survival of the chapter and the well being of other FSILGs. It will also provide an opportunity to learn and share lessons learned and best practices among the AILG community.

Benefits of accreditation include being approved housing for MIT undergraduate students (currently sophomores and above), qualifying for IRDF loans and grants, improved conditions for Recruitment and Retention, and sharing of best practices.

Important: The Basic Data Form questionnaire answers are first completed; estimated total time is less than ten hours. Paper copies will be handed out to the VC members for use in making notes of questions and discussion that come up during the visits. The detailed information that will be provided via the questionnaire document and any discussions will be treated by the Visiting Committee members and the AILG as CONFIDENTIAL to the housing corporation and undergraduate officers who prepare it. It and the accreditation findings and recommendations should be retained as a starting point for subsequent accreditation cycles. The cycle time is being discussed and for chapters in good standing is expected to be every two years.

The grouping of the metrics into sections will provide a convenient way in each area for the VC to indicate a finding of "Pass" or "Not Pass" (which would then include a notation explaining why not, or what is the reason for concern). The VC, relying on the statement that the information has been openly and honestly presented, will give the FSILG as a whole one of three findings

"Recommend Accreditation" – which is good until the next renew period, or when behavior says otherwise.

"Recommend Accreditation with caveats" – which, depending on seriousness, could suggest a revisit in a shorter period.

"Not Recommended as accredited MIT housing" – with concerns and reasons stated. Notification would be provided to the Dean of Students, the House Corporation, and the National organization (if any).

Report of Accreditation Visits 2005-2006

During spring 2005 two houses were visited as a Beta test (really an Alpha test) of an accreditation process developed by the AILG.

House #1 Theta Delta Chi, 372 Memorial Dr, Cambridge

House #2 Student House, 111 Bay State Rd, Boston

Both houses were recommended for accreditation.

The results were felt to be very useful, but the process duration and administration overhead was excessive and felt to not be scaleable.

There were three houses visited on Saturday, December 3, 2005

House #1 Phi Kappa Sigma, 530 Beacon St., Boston, Bruce Wedlock, '58

House #2 Beta Theta Pi, 119 Bay State Rd, Boston, Herman Marshall '78

House #3 Theta Chi, 528 Beacon St, Boston, Bob Ferrara, '67

All three houses were recommended for accreditation, however a revisit to Beta Theta Pi will be planned when their second building is ready to be re-occupied.

This was the first test of the BasicDataForm and the 1.5 hour visits on a weekend, with multi-house visits to test the concept of a scalable process. It worked very well and lends itself to having parallel teams after training more visiting committee members, which would then double the number of houses visited in a day.

There were three houses visited on Saturday, May 13, 2006

House #1 Phi Delta Theta, 97 Bay State Rd, Boston, Stan Wulf '65

House #2 Zeta Psi, Cambridge, Josh Kramer '97

House #3 Sigma Chi, 532 Beacon St, Boston, Karl Buttner '87

These three houses were recommended for accreditation.

This again validated the value and the scaleability of the approach using the BasicDataForm and the 1.5hr visits.

Also an accreditation visit was held the evening of Wed June, 2006

at Kappa Sigma, 407 Memorial Dr, Cambridge,

with Matthias Siebler '94 House Corp President, Matt Richards '04 RA, two national regional advisors, and an undergraduate chapter officer.

It was a useful and helpful session that will assist in the intervention activities underway. Their national fraternity has two individuals that are working with the chapter, in addition to the MIT Student Life office. The house corporation clearly will be able to benefit from the wide experience available in the AILG and among their alumni. This initial visit started the process, however much of the BasicDataForm questionnaire information could not be completed or reconciled until the everyone had returned for the fall semester, so the visit was suspended and will be resumed now that folks are back.

At this point we have some twelve individuals that have been through the new process and can be thought of as a core for leading additional visiting committees that will allow an increased pace and use of parallel committees on selected weekends which would double the rate of FSILGs visited and allow the planned goal of completing accreditation visits of all FSILGs this school year using the process developed last year. There will be more work required and volunteer effort needed as the process continues to be refined and is extended to meet the needs of the sororities.

I am please to announce that Herman Marshall, the new AILG Vice Chair, will be taking on the leadership role for this AILG goal in the new school year, while I am moving on to the AILG Treasurer role.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Bueche