Student Organization Spotlight: SAFE Liaisons
By Paul Hengesteg | SAFE Liaison Practicum Student

When was the last time you looked around at your Greek Community? No, I mean really looked. What things do you notice? What stood out for you? What was missing from your view? As a result of your inspection, could you classify the ISU Greek Community as “a relatively diverse group of people”?

That depends on your perspective, I suppose. But, I would challenge you to think about this: are groups of people being left out of the full Greek experience?

By now, everyone should be aware of The Office of Greek Affairs’ strategic plan, Vision 2020. In it, you will notice that Social Justice is an important component of the leading document. Vision 2020 will shape and influence our community and the decisions we all make. Indeed, the strategic plan will impact the people involved in the ISU Greek Community -- who will be included, how might they engage, what organizations they serve, and potentially even the philanthropic nature of the community.

A handful of years ago, a graduate student at ISU sought to find out how the ISU Greek Community felt about its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) members -- or the potential of welcoming new LGBTQ persons into the Greek Community. The results of the assessment indicated that many members of fraternities and sororities welcomed their LGBTQ brother and sisters. The data also found, however, that some work needed to be done to improve the quality of life (think: safety, sense of belonging, level of “out-ness,” and inclusionary language or practices) for those who are not heterosexual or cisgender.

Enter SAFE Liaisons. [To continue reading, click HERE]

Have you heard of them? If not, you should know about the group.

Students Advocating for Everyone (SAFE), is an organization that looks to accomplish some modest, yet complex, goals. The organization wants to promote awareness of the LGBTQ community within Greek life and to educate peers on how to create a more inclusive chapter and community for people who identify as LGBTQ. In short, SAFE believes that no one should be denied the awesome benefits of Greek memberships simply because of their gender identity/expression or their sexual orientation.

Here’s the trick: SAFE needs your help! We are a new organization, and we would love to have you join us in our advocacy efforts. The Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors has taken note of the groundbreaking work of SAFE, by recently recognizing the organization with the 2015 Excellence in Programming Award. You, too, could be part of the movement! So, if you enjoy engaging with your peers about inclusion, fairness, and making change -- and being part of something revolutionary -- this might be the place for you.

Your chapter can request a presentation from SAFE Liaisons, too, for your educational programming needs. Get in touch with us!

Many people assume that you must be LGBTQ in order to be a member of SAFE, which is not the case. We welcome all members of the ISU Greek Community! If you are interested or want to learn more about SAFE Liaisons, you can touch base with President Maria Archevald-Cansobre (Delta Zeta) (mariaa@iastate.edu) or me (paulh@iastate.edu), or complete an interest form online from http://www.greek.iastate.edu/resources/applications.