



Reducing Member Harms and Risks: Addressing Alcohol, Hazing and Sexual Assault at Zeta Tau Alpha



+43% Knowledge Gain
from Online Education

“We use data from EverFi to inform our strategy and supplement where needed with in-person education.”

Kyle Pendleton

Director for Harm Reduction and Education at Zeta Tau Alpha

National sororities and fraternities face mounting pressure – both internally and from host campuses – to curb issues like sexual assault, alcohol abuse, and hazing. Like many national fraternity and sorority executives, the leadership of the Zeta Tau Alpha knew they needed to take proactive action. They embarked on a mission to expand and improve their harm reduction and risk management program, while continuing to focus the fellowship and commitment to civic excellence at the heart of the organization.

“We have really adapted our harm reduction and prevention models to each campus specifically, and the cultures on those campuses,” says Kyle Pendleton, Director for Harm Reduction and Education at Zeta Tau Alpha. **“We realize there’s no one-size-fits-all model when it comes to prevention. We look at what the needs are of a given chapter on a given campus, while sharing an overall philosophy centered on improving the attitudes and behaviors of our members.”**

Pendleton and his team needed an online platform that would allow them to engage a diverse national audience of students both efficiently and responsively. So they turned to EverFi and *GreekLifeEdu*, an online course built to educate fraternity and sorority members on the risks and harms associated with sexual assault, alcohol abuse, and hazing.

Building Educational Programs and Going Online

Fundamentally, Zeta Tau Alpha needed to be able to educate at scale while understanding and responding to the particular needs of their different chapters on campuses as diverse as University of Central Florida, New York University, Texas Tech University, and Michigan State University. Equally important, they needed a platform that was aligned with their values and harm reduction philosophy.

EverFi provides an online curriculum driven by values, and built specifically for fraternity and sorority members. Rather than focusing simply on negative actions, this program

emphasizes the positive aspects of fraternity and sorority life, reinforcing how organizational values are in direct opposition to high-risk alcohol use, hazing, and sexual violence. Because of the program’s deep customizability, Zeta Tau Alpha was able to tailor the curriculum to their organizational values and needs. **“Online courses are the easiest and most effective way to scale our educational programs across a broad set of campuses, chapters, and individual members,”** says Pendleton.

Considering a Comprehensive Educational Curriculum

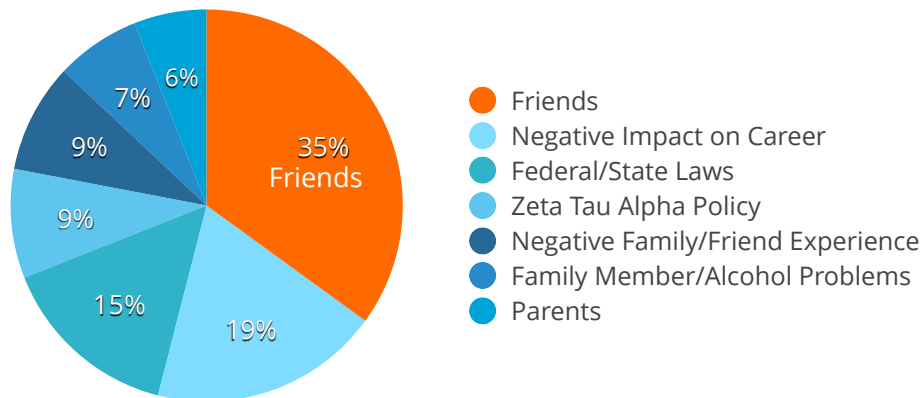
Even as sororities and fraternities work to instill unique and lifelong values, it is clear that their members are at heightened risk. Nationally, fraternity and sorority members are twice as likely to be “heavy episodic” (defined as having 4 or more drinks in a sitting for women, 5 or more for men) or “problematic” drinkers (defined as having 8 or more drinks in a sitting for women, 10 or more for men) relative to the rest of the student population. They’re also five times more likely to fall behind in schoolwork and miss class as a result of alcohol use.

invaluable resource, and one that drives forward national and chapter strategy. **“The history that we have with our GreekLifeEdu data over the years is really important,”** says Pendleton. **“Over time, the data has helped us recognize that an individual’s sisters have the biggest impact on the choices they make.”**

Charted by the data from *GreekLifeEdu* (Figure 1), Zeta Tau Alpha created a unique online learning experience on harm reduction and education that builds off of the learning outcomes of *GreekLifeEdu* called “My Sister, My Responsibility.” This program helps establish critical virtues among Zeta Tau Alpha members including a commitment to protecting and preventing harm among their fellow members.

EverFi’s data also allow Pendleton and his peers to look more closely at student engagement and activity on individual campuses, gaining an understanding of how best to target and supplement education for specific populations. **“This generation often needs to have reinforcing conversations about their behavior,”** says Kyle. **“We use data from EverFi**

Figure 1. Zeta Tau Alpha Data from GreekLifeEdu: Influential Factors in Alcohol Use Among Members



For this reason, it is particularly important that they receive proper orientation and support on these issues so they can make the most of sorority and fraternity life without falling behind. That’s why EverFi’s evidenced-based program approaches alcohol abuse as a harmful behavior that can exacerbate sexual assault and hazing.

“It’s fascinating to see the evolution of these programs,” says Pendleton. **“The chapters don’t feel forced to complete them, but actually want more. They recognize the need for their own education on these issues, and we’re there to fill that need.”**

Charting Harm Reduction Strategies with Data

Over time, the accumulated data from Zeta Tau Alpha’s harm reduction and risk reduction efforts has proven to be an

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With EverFi, Zeta Tau Alpha has fostered a values-driven, tailored, community-oriented approach to harm reduction for its members. The organization has taken a decisive step beyond simply “checking the box” to encourage and promote safer, healthier behavior that can persist throughout their members’ lives.

As Zeta Tau Alpha continues to lead the way forward, they serve as an example of how fraternities and sororities can make a powerful, positive difference in the lives of their members, helping to guide them toward better and fuller lives.