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# ROB'S REPORT: BUILDING A CULTURE OF CARE



About a year and a half ago I sat in an office of a large Jewish foundation and explained to its CEO how AEPi approaches safety, wellness, and risks. Everyone knows that college students are the most susceptible to various societal issues that we hear about. Drugs, alcohol abuse, mental health issues, hazing, and sexual assault are key examples of issues that present more commonly on campus than many care to admit. I explained to the executive that Jewish kids are certainly not immune from these issues and explained that AEPi is a 24/7/365 experience. The issues that our

members face are those that we face, and they do not disappear when they walk out the door of our houses or are not in the presence of our staff. Occasionally, we get bad press based on what an AEPi member or chapter does but AEPi chooses to engage — sometimes to our own detriment, because if we do not, nobody else will. My counterpart was surprised that I spoke so candidly and approached these issues head on.

AEPi's culture of care does not emerge by accident, it is intrinsic to our Jewish identity and then engineered through the systems, structures, and educational programs we put in place to support our brothers. When we talk about care and safety, we're not describing a passive atmosphere, we're describing an intentional design choice embedded into how our fraternity operates. Our chapter structures, officer roles, and educational programs form the backbone of a system that prioritizes wellbeing, accountability, and responsible leadership at every level.

Our educational strategy is the first major input into this culture. Our curriculum at programs like our Rising Leader Academy, Leven Leadership Academy, and Racoosin School of Fraternalism (at our annual convention) teach brothers not only *what* to do, but *how* to think about care as a core leadership responsibility. It continues with e-learning modules and chapter-based programs that are deployed on campuses. The Seven Outcomes of AEPi — especially health & wellness, personal growth, leadership development, and lifelong brotherhood — give us a shared framework for shaping behavior and decision making. These outcomes ensure that care is not an add-on; it is a measurable expectation woven into every educational touchpoint.

Equally important is the structure of our chapters themselves. Leadership and mentorship roles work in concert with one another and are intentionally designed to distribute and duplicate responsibility for safety, conflict resolution, and member support. The Executive Board model reinforces shared leadership, while committees and peer-led initiatives create multiple access points for brothers to seek help, voice concerns, and build healthy habits. Ritual, tradition, and bonding further strengthen the relational fabric that makes care possible.

Finally, AEPi builds and leverages relationships. Our chapter advisers, educational leadership consultants (ELCs), big brothers, and mentors all hold unique roles that focus on relational value that serves our undergraduates. Our life members (alumni) focus on relationships that can bolster each other. When paired with the communal relationships we form with parents, grandparents, administrators, and others, a fabric is woven that blankets our entire fraternity. We exhibit care that builds into trust and because safety is most effective when it is rooted in trust, we thrive.

These systems work together to create a proactive — not reactive — culture. Chapters that follow our educational programs and leadership structures are better equipped to identify concerns early, intervene effectively, and support brothers through challenges. They model the kind of responsible, values-driven leadership that defines AEPi at its best. And when alumni, staff, and volunteers reinforce these structures, we create a multi-layered safety net that extends far beyond any single chapter or campus.

AEPi's culture of care is our greatest strategic asset. It strengthens our Jewish mission, enhances the undergraduate experience, and prepares our brothers for lives of leadership and service. It all starts with care. By continuing to invest in our educational programs and chapter structures, we ensure that care and safety remain not just ideals but lived realities across our fraternity.