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Sigma Alpha Epsilon Needs to Answer for Enabling Rape Culture on Campus

NOW Calls on SAE President Brad Cohen to Take Rape Seriously and Establish a National Plan of Action

New York, March 10, 2015 – The National Organization for Women is calling on Sigma Alpha Epsilon president Brad Cohen to establish a national plan of action to end the normalization of sexism and predatory sexual behavior within its membership ranks.

One of the largest fraternities in the country with 15,000 members, SAE, which has been dubbed “Sexual Assault Expected” on campuses nationwide, is notorious for its reputation of fostering a climate of predatory sexual behavior. [According to Willis](#), the country’s largest fraternity insurance broker, sexual assault is the second most common type of insurance claim that fraternities make—constituting a full 15 percent of all claims.

“It’s time to turn a spotlight on the role fraternities play in creating a climate that enables sexual assault on campuses,” said New York NOW President, Sonia Ossorio. “We’re calling on SAE leadership to create and uphold a new national standard of conduct that rejects misogyny, sexual harassment and predatory sexual behavior.”

SAE faces renewed scrutiny in the recently released documentary on campus sexual assault, [The Hunting Ground](#). Within recent months, there have been complaints of sexual assaults at no less than four SAE houses across the country—[Emory University](#), [Iowa State University](#), [Johns Hopkins](#), and [Loyola Marymount University](#). In February, [Yale University](#) put its SAE chapter on probation until 2016 for violating the university’s sexual misconduct policy, and [Stanford University](#) recently suspended all on-campus SAE housing due to concerns about sexual harassment.

The fraternity made headlines yesterday, when a video of SAE members from Oklahoma University using racial slurs went viral. SAE President Cohen and the Illinois-based national leadership of SAE immediately shut down that chapter.

“Shutting down the Oklahoma University chapter sends the unequivocal message that racism will not be tolerated,” Ossorio said. “By the same token, the leadership of this fraternity has an obligation to root out an entrenched culture that demeans women and normalizes predatory sexual behavior. It’s long past the time for fraternities to take a proactive role in ending violence against women on campus.”

The National Organization for Women is the nation's largest organization working to advance women's rights and improve women's lives. NOW New York aims to advance reproductive justice, secure workplace equality, combat racism and homophobia, and end discrimination and violence against all women.

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