Research-Based Findings

Benefits of Greek Life:
- Students are drawn to Greek life for its emphasis on social events, group life, community service and leadership, and Greek students are consistently more satisfied with their college experience than other students.
- Membership in Greek life that is goals or values driven (e.g., an interest in philanthropy) has been shown to be protective against the negative effects of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use. A desire to participate in the party culture increases students’ risk of experiencing negative AOD-related consequences, such as violence, property damage, harm to neighborhood quality life and alcohol poisoning.

Impacts of AOD Use:
- Greek involvement has been identified as a risk factor for increased AOD use, including marijuana and prescription drugs. This is especially true for men and leads to personal and social harms, including violence and property damage.
- Students with established risky drinking patterns are more likely to self-select into Greek life.
- Greek students tend to have more positive expectations about the effects of alcohol such as making friends, ability to more easily create romantic connections and increased social status, but they tend to experience a greater number of negative alcohol-related consequences including those listed above.

Harm Reduction Strategies:
- Social norming, which helps correct the misperception that “everyone” is drinking, is only effective for Greek members when using information about Greek life AOD use. This information may be effective in decreasing alcohol use for members whose use is higher than their Greek peers.
- Friday and early morning classes can have a significant impact on high-risk groups, such as males and Greeks.
  - This underscores the importance of encouraging faculty to appropriately schedule (e.g., Monday mornings) academic exams and papers, as well as multiple drafts of assignments to keep students on track throughout the semester and avoid misuse of alcohol and last minute use of stimulants. Education about study skills and time management is recommended for similar reasons.

Other Impacts:
- Both fraternities and sororities use alcohol to display and assert social status, but there are differences between men and women about the meaning of alcohol use. Men who adhere to masculine norms are more likely to drink to intoxication and experience alcohol-related problems. Women who attempt to drink the same way as men (such as type and amount of alcohol) without losing control do so to increase their status and be seen as more sexually desirable. Unfortunately, this is not biologically possible and the attempt leads to higher levels of intoxication and increased alcohol-related problems, including being targeted for violence and exploitation, as well as the stigma of not measuring up to the masculine norm.
- Students become significantly more intoxicated at fraternity parties compared to other off-campus parties; students of any type drink more at fraternity parties than non-fraternity parties.
Current Efforts
At CU-Boulder:

- Community Health delivers AOD education to all new sorority members that includes information about what people expect when drinking, the physiological effects of alcohol and other drugs (prescription drugs, marijuana), as well as protective strategies (e.g., eating high protein foods before drinking and looking out for friends) and skills for helping others.
- Community Health offers Bystander Health Crisis training to all sorority chapters and fraternities as requested. This training includes skills for helping those experiencing the toxic effects of drinking too much or of mixing drugs and alcohol, such as passing out or stopping breathing.
- When requested, Community Health offers AOD, wellness and consent programming tailored for fraternity members. Topics include bystander intervention, alcohol serving size assessment, drug interaction and refusal skills.
- Some CU-Boulder sorority chapters have instituted mandatory sober time two hours before events. Food and nonalcoholic beverages are offered to ensure that women arrive more sober to events, such as formals.
- Night Ride, a free taxi service on campus, provides students with a safe way of getting home.
- Off-Campus Housing and Neighborhood Relations offers party registration, which allows students who register their parties to receive a warning call from police if they receive a noise complaint and take corrective action.

Future Opportunities
Expand Outreach:

- Recommend an increase in key CU-Boulder staff positions related to Greek Life and Leadership. This would expand support for multicultural Greeks, as the Greek life and leadership coordinator role is currently primarily focused on affiliated, traditional sororities.
- Provide outreach efforts to students who seek to join the Greek system, but ultimately don’t or choose to disengage.
- Enhance incentives for Greek organizations to utilize health and violence prevention resources on campus.

Other Opportunities:

- Recommend a CU-Boulder taskforce to review the current status of CU-fraternity relations.
  - Review university resources offered to unaffiliated fraternities.
  - Determine re-affiliation requirements.
- Continue to increase the number of AOD screenings early in the academic year particularly during recruitment, as well as give additional information about injury prevention and confidential resources.
- Encourage that all Greek organizations require sober hours before formal Greek events.
- Utilize additional comprehensive environmental approaches targeted at addressing pregaming and off-campus parties (such as social host ordinances and party patrols), which in turn addresses concerns about Greeks’ impact on the campus and neighborhoods without targeting the Greek population specifically.