Does Phired Up Productions do anything for culturally-based fraternities & sororities (like NPHC, NALFO, NMGC, NAPA, etc.)? The answer is, and always has been, a resounding YES. But the company wants to do more.

As we announced in December of 2011 (read full post here), Phired Up Productions gathered together a small group of smart people who understand Phired Up’s core philosophies and the unique needs of culturally-based fraternities/sororities. This team, consisting of a diverse mix of volunteers and professionals from both the inter/national organization side and the campus-based professional side, is committed to advancing the fraternal movement through the creation of educational resources focused on helping culturally-based groups grow. The task force is excited to share some of its results thus far, what we plan to roll out in the near future, and how YOU can help.

The Mission
Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” This oft-quoted phrase explains the inspiration for Phired Up, for our philosophy, and for our work. It also goes a long way toward explaining the genesis of most culturally-focused fraternal organizations – groups of driven individuals with a shared cultural background gathered together to change their world in a meaningful way. Culturally-based fraternities and sororities were founded to make a meaningful impact on society — to change the world — and the best way to do that is to ensure that there is always a high quantity of high quality people to achieve that mission. Our mission is to help these organizations do just that — the task force was built to create resources that would help cause-based membership organizations find the people they need to change their world.

We have assessed the culturally-based fraternal landscape, adding our own unique knowledge in order to dream, write, plan for and create a variety of educational resources specifically for culturally-based fraternities/sororities that want to attract more people to their cause. The efforts of the task force have resulted in a foundational knowledge base so that Phired Up can better assist culturally-based fraternities/sororities grow through the sharing of proven organizational growth strategies.

Our Task Force
Through referrals, volunteers, and some “recruiting,” the members of the task force were assembled at the beginning of 2012. The task force is made of fraternity/sorority stakeholders from both culturally-based organizations along with other fraternity/sorority groups. We have a mixture of campus-based professionals with national volunteers. We think we have created the best mix of minds possible, and as a result, we have many decades of combined culturally-based organization advisement and membership experience at our fingertips.

Note: We created this task force because we believe in the purpose of culturally-based organizations. We want to support this through offering resources include time, energy, and tools. This task force was not built so that Phired Up Productions could bring in more revenue. The express intent has been to develop resources – ideally free – to support the growth of the culturally-based fraternal movement.

The following people contributed to the task force this year:

Jennifer L. Almonte-Gomez - Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc.
National VP of Expansion for Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc.

Ashlee Canty - Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
Program Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life, DePaul University Office of Student Involvement

Ricardo Cortez - Sigma Lambda Beta
Director of Member Services & Development, Sigma Lambda Beta

Arthur E. Doctor, Jr. - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Graduate Assistant, Office of Greek Life, The Florida State University
What The Task Force Believes

- Culturally-based fraternities and sororities are membership organizations (made of people and purpose).
- Membership organizations need a consistent amount of high quality people to be successful.
- Culturally-based fraternities and sororities were founded to change the world in a meaningful way.
- The more people (members, raving fans, supporters) an organization has to support its founding mission, the better it typically does at achieving that mission.
- Achieving a purpose-based mission betters the world.

Phired Up teaches cause-based membership organizations the art and science of organizational growth. This is where our task force comes in. Our group is fully aware of the myths of “quality over quantity” and “we don’t recruit.” These statements are rampant in the culturally-based community. However, as members and advisors we know this:

Culturally-based organizations are relevant - they have an added value for those who want a specific type of experience.

Culturally-based organizations have a rich history, that if shared shows the benefits and strengths of a lifetime commitment and family.

Culturally-based organizations CAN and NEED to intentionally attract members (recruit) in order to sustain and maximize their impact – they just need to be taught the skills and strategies to effectively market their organizations through relationship-focused means.

Culturally-based organizations exist in a knowledge gap on their campus, as there are still people out there who don’t understand them.

Below are some direct quotes from several of our task force members when asked about their personal philosophy on MEMBERSHIP GROWTH as it relates to culturally-based fraternities and sororities.
“I feel that culturally-based organizations need a shifting change in recruitment practices. Instead of focusing on a selective, narrow pool of potential new members, the availability and knowledge of potential membership needs to be more present & aware to campus communities. Attracting more people matters because it will create more presence of the group on the campus and it will yield a higher potential in sparking interest into individuals about the organization.”

“I think that there is a significant place on college campuses for culturally based fraternities and sororities. As a member I also see the flaws in our organizations. Sometimes we do more harm than good to our own communities by continuing past harmful behaviors. I think that groups need to be educated on not only our purpose but getting back to those activities that give us our purpose and place on college campuses. I think we also need to get out of the “they will come to us behavior” and put ourselves out there as the best and brightest to attract a similar member. In doing so there has to be value congruence. We can't continue to talk about the benefits of our organizations if we're hazing and "holding down” a 2.3 chapter GPA. You need more than that to join. I think it’s important for culturally based groups to practice what they preach. If we claim that our benefit is networking, higher GPA, man/womanhood, sister/brotherhood then we need to live it and we need to find others who want to live it too. If we took away all the parties, strolls, and steps and get to the basics how many of our members would still continue to do those activities that are essential to our existence and purpose. If we want to be around for another 100 years it's time to put our values into action and hold our members accountable. In the Fraternity/Sorority Advising world I think there being a lack of knowledge or not being able to tell "secrets" mindset has hindered the proper development for students in these groups. The only thing that is a secret is ritual and if you're living that I know your values without anyone telling me what you said during your ceremony. I believe that the education needed is not only for the students but advisors who work with these groups as well.”

“As it stands research shows that many students who identify of being from specific cultures such as Latin or Black often may not graduate at the same rate as other students. Fraternities and Sororities can help this. My philosophy is that it is our responsibility to provide relevant and sensitive programming to allow for culturally based chapters to maximize their potential for growth.”

“Every Organization requires members to be sustainable. This is a fact of being Greek. As an undergraduate Chapter, recruitment and intake is constantly needed in order for a Chapter to survive, and in cultural Greek Organizations this process is much different than in Panhellenic and other mainstream umbrella groups. Recruitment for cultural Greeks is not a week of Rush, or a semester of COB. However, every Organization has their own specific needs during recruitment, but many core values are the same. Members need to be driven, dedicated, committed, and passionate. They need to be willing to understand that they are members for life and that they are always associated with their Organization while on their campus, whether in their letters/colors or not."

“Growth is Good. A healthy membership size provides the financial stability for an organization to accomplish its mission. When membership shrinks, groups tend to spend the bulk of their time worrying about finances and making up for lost membership in scattershot, stressful, and oftentimes unproductive ways, rather than focusing on their mission. A larger, high quality membership also attracts the best quality people from whatever the population pool is, which, of course, leads to more growth. As Steve Jobs says, 'A people like to work with other A people’.”

“One of our biggest challenges is to get our culturally-based organizations to understand that we do recruit. We may not participate in a grouped formalized recruitment process but at some levels we do recruit new members into our organizations. I believe once we educate them on that aspect we will see a great boost in membership growth. It goes back to Perception and Reality.”

“There is always room for improvement even in the best organizations. The areas that I feel hold culturally based organizations back are the attitudes towards new membership. They are stuck with the idea that since they are the best organization everyone else should know that and interest should come to them. I also believe that specifically for Latino Greeks sometimes they are not honest with interest about the new membership process and so there are some people who lose interest in an organization when they start to realize that it isn't as
described. Culturally based organizations also lack resources. They are the most ignored groups on campus. They usually fly under the radar since they are meeting requirements. However, they lack the attention they need to help plan for the future and guide them in the right direction.”

“My personal philosophy on membership growth in relation to culturally based fraternities and sororities is for these organizations to live up to the values of support, awareness, and unity within their respective cultures. Living up to these values and demonstrating these through their actions can break down the barriers that hold them back from meeting their true potential of finding men and women to help promote their organization’s values and traditions. I believe these groups need to understand that some of their current practices and “traditions” are slowly killing their organization’s existence. In order for these organizations to meet their full potential is to understand the difference between recruitment and marketing and quantity versus quality. Changing their marketing practices can attract a higher quantity of people who may show interest in their organization. Our culturally-based organizations need to market to the higher quantity to select the higher quality to help benefit the cultural communities within the university and surrounding communities.”

So what do we suggest?

**Call to Action**

Our team recognizes the need for the engagement of all campus partners (students, staff, faculty, administration, national organizations) but it starts with providing tools and resources to the members of these organizations in order to assist them in:

- Understanding their Purpose
- Becoming Aware of their Influence
- Communicating their Message
- Attracting People to their Cause
- Making a Difference

Specifically as it relates to organizational growth, generally, culturally-based organizations lack the funds and volunteers to offer training to each individual members on these aforementioned skills. This does these organizations and their potential impact a disservice. Phired Up wants to remedy this gap by providing free resources to help begin conversations and train members with the tools and skills they need to be successful.

**What We’ve Created & What We Still Need**

As a result of our initial research and conversations, we have created a diagnostic tool that is specific to culturally-based organizations (Find it [here](#)). It asks the questions in a language that is familiar and relevant to the work they do in order to engage new members for their organizations. In its preliminary stages, this assessment will provide us data on what culturally-based organizations are doing currently and how we can help.

We have also begun the task of creating new “think tanks” on topics such as “perception vs. reality of culturally-based organizations”, the value of networking, tabling done with excellence, and quantity vs. quality. We have created target areas of cultural competency, gathering people to your cause, membership selection, and inter-Greek relations/social reputation, where we would like to create more resources to assist culturally-based chapters.

Most recently we have begun conversations in larger settings, including NGLA and AFLV, where our team members, with Phired Up staff, have offered sessions specifically targeted towards culturally-based organizations and how they can use “recruitment” to their benefit. We also look forward to continuing conversations at this year’s AFA Annual Meeting. It is our belief that more passionate minds make better solutions. Which is why…

**We need your help!** Do you have expertise in these areas? Do you have a passion for helping culturally-based organizations succeed? If so, we need your help with very specific tasks: We want to create FREE RESOURCES, to be hosted on the Phired Up site, around the above topics. Video tutorials, 1-2 page informational documents, blogs, links to
already existing resources, etc. -- anything that can serve as a free resource, specifically for culturally-based fraternities & sororities, which we can share on-line. Here is the full list of topics we're looking to build resources around:

- How to build quality relationships with all prospective members
- How to “table” and “promote your organization” in a relationship-focused way
- How quantity and quality work together in culturally-based organizations
- How the word “recruitment” fits in culturally-based organizations
- How to effectively communicate the VALUE and VALUES of your culturally-based organization
- How to ensure that only the highest quality prospects are selected for membership
- How to select members using an objective, values-based approach
- How to utilize referrals in the process of growing your culturally based fraternity/sorority
- How to get people to interest/info sessions
- How to attract not just members, but “raving fans” and “participants”
- How to motivate members of culturally-based organizations to grow their personal and organizational networks

This list is just the tip of the iceberg. Please feel free to recommend or submit other ideas. All volunteers should contact Matt Mattson (Matt@PhiredUp.com) directly (Please note: all resources are subject to vetting and editing based on the values and ethics of Phired Up Productions and the larger fraternity/sorority movement).

Phired Up teaches that “you can’t recruit who you don’t know”, “people don’t join organizations, people join people”, and “reputation is earned through relationships.” Culturally-based organizations have the strong potential to build their membership based on these “secrets” and be VERY successful at it - all because there are no barriers to HOW they can recruit. Culturally-based organizations are in a unique position to truly implement all that Phired Up and our resource team has to offer once we as a whole can help get past fears or lack of resources when it comes to organizational growth. If culturally-based fraternities and sororities practice Social Excellence, something they CAN do with the right tools and training, there will be no barrier to increasing the quantity of quality people attracted to these incredibly important causes.

Phired Up Productions is an education firm providing membership growth solutions to cause-oriented organizations. Our message is for organizational leaders that desire a higher quantity of higher quality individuals involved in their cause. Phired Up teaches the art and science of attracting high quality members to an important cause. Since 2002 Phired Up Productions has worked especially hard to grow the fraternity/sorority movement. Learn more at www.PhiredUp.com.