



April 2022:

A Lesson on Social & Personal Identities

What it's about:

The resource explains the difference between personal and social identity. According to lesson 1 of the University of Wisconsin DEI Foundations course, “personal identity is what differentiates us from others within a social identity group” - like your personality type, hobbies, or career choice, “whereas social identity is how we categorize both ourselves and others” - this relates to the physical, social, and mental characteristics of others like ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. It also further explores the role that power, privilege, and intersectionality play in shaping our perspective and how our identities might be perceived in society at large.

Why it's Important:

When we have language to describe our differences, it is easier to celebrate how they make us unique. This can provide a richer, more diverse chapter experience—one that equally values commonalities and also affirms the individual aspects of each person's identity. Fraternity provides a distinctive opportunity to live, work, and make positive memories with members that boast diverse experiences, talents, ways of thinking, and identities—specifically, social and personal identities. Being able to understand the layers that make up your own identity, as well as those of others, helps to make the most of the fraternal experience.

Reflect & Discuss:

What are your social identities and how have they influenced the way you see the world? Which social identities exist in your chapter? Which ones do you not notice in your chapter? Is there an example of identity you didn't encounter until joining your chapter? How has being exposed to that person grown your perspective?