

# Parents and Family Guide to Fraternity & Sorority Life

Revised May 2019





Dear Parents & Families,

Thank you for visiting our webpage and the **Parents and Family Guide to Fraternity & Sorority Life** at West Virginia University.

We have developed this manual to help you understand the complexity of fraternity and sorority membership, and to give you some basic information about the West Virginia community.

Membership in a fraternity or sorority can be a valuable experience for your student. The contributions these organizations can make to their educational experience are numerous, as life-long friendships are made and leadership skills are developed.

We need you, as a parent, to be an active partner in your student's fraternity or sorority experience by becoming familiar with the community and the organization. Please do not hesitate to contact the staff in the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life if you ever have questions about anything. We are here to support you and your student in making their experience at West Virginia University one that they will remember for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Matthew Richardson'.

Matthew R. Richardson, Ed.D.  
Director

## INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia University Greek community is one that supports and complements the academic mission of the University; believes in and abides by the founding principles of the inter/national organizations and the responsibilities associated with fraternity or sorority membership; and promotes the development of its members intellectually, socially, and ethically.

While each fraternity and sorority defines its own set of values, the West Virginia University Greek community collectively promotes a set of values that fall into the following core pillars:

**Scholarship, Leadership, Brotherhood & Sisterhood, Service and Philanthropy, and Diversity and Inclusion.** Building lifelong friendships through collaborative and meaningful relationships is also a key component to the fraternal experience at West Virginia University.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University are considered self-governing entities that freely associate and determine their own membership. Each fraternity and sorority is a member of one of the four governing councils at West Virginia University, i.e., the Interfraternity Council (IFC), the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), Multicultural Greek Council (MCGC), or the Collegiate Panhellenic Association (CPA). Each fraternity or sorority is affiliated with a national or international organization.

## OFFICE OF FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

The purpose of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life at West Virginia University is to create a fraternity and sorority community at West Virginia University that will support and complement the academic mission of the University, that believes in and abides by the founding principles of the inter/national organizations and the responsibilities associated with fraternity or sorority membership, and that promotes the development of its members intellectually, socially, and ethically.



**Dr. Matthew Richardson** serves as the Director of the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life. Dr. Richardson provides strategic leadership for the fraternity and sorority community and provides general support to each governing council and member chapters. Dr. Richardson works more directly with the Interfraternity Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and Fraternity & Sorority Life Alumni Council. Dr. Richardson graduated from Duquesne University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature, The University of Akron in 2011 with a Master of Arts Degree in Higher Education, and the University of Pittsburgh in 2013 with a Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education.

**Katie Moore** is the Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life. She is responsible for providing support and guidance to all students in the community, as well as coordinating administrative processes for the Office. Katie works directly with the Panhellenic Association and Multicultural Greek Council. Katie is a 2010 graduate of the Benedum Collaborative 5 Year Teacher Education program at West Virginia University. Prior to her appointment in 2019, Katie was an elementary school teacher in Virginia and West Virginia since 2010.



The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life also employs 2 graduate assistants who provide direct support and advisement to our governing councils. They include:



**Khadija-Awa Diop**- Graduate Assistant for the National Pan-Hellenic Council and sister of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Khadija-Awa is studying to earn her Master of Journalism Degree at WVU. She is a 2018 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh.

**Paige Hillman**- Graduate Assistant for the Interfraternity Council and sister of Alpha Phi Sorority. Paige is studying to become a Speech-Language Pathologist at WVU and is a 2018 graduate of the University of Montana.



## RECOGNIZED FRATERNITIES & SORORITIES

The following organizations are recognized fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University. Please consult the Chapter Status portion of our website for the most up-to-date standing of each group (<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/chapter-statuses>). Also, be sure to check out our community scorecard for comparative analysis of each chapter (<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/chapter-statuses/community-scorecard>)

### **IFC Fraternities**

1. Alpha Epsilon Pi
2. Alpha Gamma Rho
3. Lambda Chi Alpha
4. Phi Delta Theta
5. Phi Kappa Psi
6. Phi Sigma Phi
7. Pi Kappa Phi
8. Sigma Alpha Epsilon
9. Sigma Phi Epsilon
10. Sigma Nu

### **NPHC Organizations**

1. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
2. Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
3. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
4. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
5. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
6. Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

### Collegiate Panhellenic Association

1. Alpha Omicron Pi
2. Alpha Phi
3. Alpha Xi Delta
4. Chi Omega
5. Delta Gamma
6. Kappa Kappa Gamma
7. Pi Beta Phi
8. Sigma Kappa

### Multicultural Greek Council

1. Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc.

## UNRECOGNIZED/INDEPENDENT FRATERNITIES

In the event that an organization is closed by the University and/or inter/national organization, some students may hold alumni membership in a particular fraternity but not be a part of recognized chapter. The following fraternities have been closed and are not recognized by WVU or their respective inter/national organization:

1. Beta Theta Pi
2. Delta Tau Delta
3. Kappa Sigma
4. Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji)
5. Sigma Alpha Mu
6. Tau Kappa Epsilon

Should your student indicate that he is joining one of these organizations, do know that these groups are unregulated at both the local and national levels and he should refrain from associating. Please notify the national organization and the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life that your student is being recruited by past members of these organizations.

Further, in the Fall of 2018, five fraternities “disassociated” from University recognition over disagreements on minimum standards, expectations, and oversight. These groups are supported by their inter/national organization but are NOT supported/recognized by West Virginia University. **We strongly encourage students not to join these organizations that refuse to accept and uphold our Mountaineer Values.** These five fraternities make up the “Independent Interfraternity Council”. They include:

1. Alpha Sigma Phi
2. Kappa Alpha Order
3. Phi Sigma Kappa
4. Sigma Chi
5. Theta Chi

Note that there is no University oversight of these organizations in terms of recruitment, new member education, and social events. They are governed by their national organizations, with most having a headquarters in states like Indiana, and none having headquarters rooted in West Virginia.

## WHY DO STUDENTS JOIN A FRATERNITY OR SORORITY?

The reasons that a student may choose to explore social fraternity or sorority life are as varied as the students themselves who join. Many students find that membership in a chapter gives them opportunities to develop valuable skills they have not been able to find elsewhere. Sometimes, joining a fraternity or sorority is an excellent way for some students to meet people, get more acclimated to campus life, gain important leadership skills, have fun, contribute to the community, and/or establish life-long friendships. Fraternity and sorority life is not for every student – but it is a great opportunity for many!

## PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

An important part of a college education is learning to work with others and to give of oneself. Fraternities and sororities work with those in need through their individual national philanthropies and local service projects. Community service activities enhance members' personal awareness, while expanding their individual well-being.

In the Spring 2019 semester, the fraternity and sorority community (spearheaded by the Collegiate Panhellenic Association) successfully funded a \$37,000 school build in a developing village of Malawi on the Continent of Africa. Each council supported this year-long endeavor as the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation was adopted as the all-Greek philanthropic endeavor in the Fall of 2017.

Since then, each council has elected to support various philanthropic endeavors. Panhellenic continues to fundraise for the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation, as the Interfraternity Council selected the WVU Children's Hospital as their beneficiary. Our NPHC community continuously serves the Black/African-American community in Morgantown and beyond through various educational initiatives, as well.

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement plays an important role in fraternity and sorority life. Each individual chapter places great emphasis on high scholarship and promotes academic excellence through supervised study halls, incentive programs, and access to tutoring. To remain a member in good standing, each new and initiated member must maintain a chapter-specified grade point average. Currently, chapters must maintain a collective 2.75 GPA in order to remain in good standing.

The average GPA for the Greeks was a 3.08 in Fall 2018 and a 3.06 in Spring 2019. These averages have consistently been above the all-University average since the deferred membership policy (requiring 12 earned credits and a 2.75 GPA to join) was enacted in 2016.

## CHAPTER ACCREDITATION

Each year, chapters are required to participate in the Chapter Accreditation Program. Through educational programming and other minimum standards, our chapters are engaged in constant educational opportunities that encourage individual growth. Please review the most current Chapter Accreditation Program at the following link: (<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/strategicplan/documents>)

## GREEK WEEK

Greek Week is a time in the spring when the members of the fraternity and sorority community come together around events of celebration such as community service events or events that celebrate the fraternity and sorority community. Traditionally, fraternity and sorority chapters are paired into teams that compete to win points to determine the Greek Week champion. Points are determined by chapters' winning the various events and/or by having the highest participation and contributing the most to the community service effort.

## FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LEADERSHIP

The fraternity and sorority community offers several opportunities for developing one's leadership skills. Students will have the opportunity to attend regional and national conferences, president's conferences, and chapter headquarter events. These events allow students to develop skills in organizational management, delegation, goal setting and time management. Chapters also provide educational programming in several of these areas.

In the Spring 2019 semester, the inaugural Greek Leadership Academy was held, graduating 20 students from the fraternity and sorority community. This academy is 8 weeks and runs in the fall and spring semesters. It is open to all initiated members of the fraternity and sorority community.

## SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Campus life extends beyond the realm of the classroom to create a balance between academics and social life. The fraternity and sorority community offers students unique social opportunities, providing them with enriching experiences. Activities range from: exchanges or socials between individual fraternities and sororities, events hosted in local clubs, functions with alumnae, athletic competitions and formal dances, brother and sister only events, Soul Food dinner nights, BBQ cookouts, educational programming, panel discussions, and date parties. Attendance at these events is not required, but for many students, social events provide a nice balance to their challenging academic curriculum.

For more information on our social policy, please reference the Social Event Policy (Pg. 15), accessible by clicking this link (<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/members/resources>) and accessing the *OFSL Manual of Operations* under "Leadership & Chapter Management."

## ADDRESSING HAZING IN FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE

### Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life

Our office maintains the highest level of confidentiality possible when dealing with any hazing reports or matters. We strongly encourage students to report any incidents of hazing to our office at **304-293-8201**.

### The West Virginia University Statement on Hazing

The University defines Hazing as any action or situation which (1) endangers or adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of another person or persons; (2) would cause extreme embarrassment



or adversely affect the dignity of another person or persons; or (3) causes another person or persons to destroy or remove public or private property. This includes, but is not limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced consumption of any food, alcohol, drug or other substance, any activity which would subject an individual or individuals to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation or forced exclusion from social contact. Hazing with or without the consent of a student is prohibited. Initiations or activities of student organizations are prohibited from including any feature that is dangerous, harmful, or degrading to the student. A violation of this prohibition renders both the organization and participating individuals subject to discipline. Any student who knowingly witnesses or acquiesces in the presence of hazing is also subject to discipline.

Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance or any other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property.

Any activities as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in a recognized student organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding. Any recognized student organization that commits hazing is subject to disciplinary action by the appropriate registering organization.

As parents, you are an ally to us in investigating and adjudicating acts of hazing. Please be aware that we will investigate any claim of hazing, but without specific information or the participation of a complainant, we are often not able to address the root of the issue at hand. Parents should know who the Chapter Advisor is, and be familiar with how to contact him or her. Reporting acts of hazing to the chapter advisor and the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life will assist us in stopping the alleged behavior.

## HOW TO REPORT HAZING AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

There are several options that you may take. They include speaking to an individual on the phone, leaving a voicemail, sending an E-mail, or filing a public report.

Regardless of the method you choose, please remember that if a student's safety is ever in jeopardy, it is imperative that you call for emergency services right away.

- Call University Police at 304-293-2677
- Call the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life at 304-293-8201
- Call the Office of Student Conduct at 304-293-8111
- E-mail an account of the accusation to [GreekLife@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:GreekLife@mail.wvu.edu)
- File a public report at: <https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/submit-a-complaint>



## NATIONAL FRATERNITY AND SORORITY ORGANIZATIONS

### National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. – NPHC [www.nphchq.org](http://www.nphchq.org)



The NPHC is a national group of the nine (9) historically African-American fraternities (5) and sororities (4) in North America. There is a national conference every other year that undergraduate students attend to share ideas about fraternity and sorority life. Regional and state conferences are also held every other year (even numbered years).

### National Panhellenic Conference - NPC [www.npcwomen.org](http://www.npcwomen.org)



The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) is a national group of 26 women's sororities in North America who are members of the National Panhellenic Conference. Representatives from each national sorority meet annually to develop policies and procedures that govern all 26 groups throughout the United States.

### North American Interfraternity Conference - NIC [www.nicindy.org](http://www.nicindy.org)

Founded in 1909, the North-American Interfraternity Conference, Inc. is the trade association representing 70 International and National Men's Fraternities. The NIC serves to advocate the needs of its member fraternities through enrichment of the fraternity experience; advancement and growth of the fraternity community; and enhancement of the educational mission of the host institutions.



The NIC is also committed to enhancing the benefits of fraternity membership through its relationship with Interfraternity Councils. Today, the NIC's member organizations have approximately 5,500 chapters located on more than 800 campuses in the United States and Canada with approximately 350,000 undergraduate members.

### National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations - NALFO [www.nalfo.org](http://www.nalfo.org)

The National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, Inc., (NALFO) is an “umbrella” coalition established in 1998 to promote and foster positive interfraternal relations, communication, and development of all Latino fraternal organizations through mutual respect, leadership, honesty, professionalism and education.



## FRATERNITY AND SORORITY ACADEMIC/LEADERSHIP HONOR SOCIETIES



### **GAMMA SIGMA ALPHA - NATIONAL FRATERNITY AND SORORITY ACADEMIC HONOR SOCIETY**

**[www.gammasigmaalpha.org](http://www.gammasigmaalpha.org)**

Gamma Sigma Alpha is a national Greek-Letter academic honor society. In order to be eligible for membership, a student must have a 3.5 cumulative GPA and be a junior or senior. Applications are accepted each semester, with applicants who meet the criteria automatically granted membership. A one-time national fee is charged, for which members receive a certificate and a pin.

### **ORDER OF OMEGA - NATIONAL FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LEADERSHIP HONOR SOCIETY**

**<http://www.orderofomega.org/>**

Membership in the Order of Omega is limited to the top 3% of fraternity and sorority members at West Virginia University. In order to be eligible, a student must hold a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and be a junior or senior. In addition, students must demonstrate significant leadership and service to the campus and/or fraternity and sorority community. Applications are accepted each semester, with the current student members selecting the new members. Students that are selected pay a one-time national fee of \$100.00, for which they receive a certificate and a pin. The Order of Omega also selects an Honor Initiate each semester. This person must have given significantly for the improvement of the West Virginia University fraternity and sorority community.



## WVU GOVERNING COUNCILS

The fraternity and sorority community at West Virginia University is coordinated by three separate governing councils comprised of elected representatives from within the organization represented by the council:

**Interfraternity Council (IFC)**  
**National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)**  
**Multicultural Greek Council (MCGC)**  
**Collegiate Panhellenic Association (CPA)**

A current list of the WVU chapters in each council can be found at: <https://greeklife.wvu.edu/about-us/our-chapters>.

## THE INTERFRATERNITY COUNCIL

<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/join/ifc>

The Interfraternity Council is the governing council for the fraternity community at West Virginia University. The purpose of the IFC is to govern the member fraternities, promote the intellectual, philanthropic, fraternal and social values of the fraternities at West Virginia University, and to maintain cooperation between these social fraternities, their respective inter/national headquarters, alumni, the Morgantown community, and the University.



## THE NATIONAL PAN-HELLENIC COUNCIL, INC.

<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/join/nphc>



The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC) promotes interaction through forums, meetings and other mediums for the exchange of information, and engages in cooperative programming and initiatives through various activities and functions.

On May 10, 1930, on the campus of Howard University, in Washington DC, the National Pan-Hellenic Council was formed as a permanent organization with the following charter members: Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. In 1931, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. joined the Council. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. joined in 1937 and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. completed the list of member organizations in 1997.

The stated purpose and mission of the organization in 1930 was "Unanimity of thought and action as far as possible in the conduct of Greek-letter collegiate fraternities and sororities, and to consider problems of mutual interest to its member organizations." Early in 1937, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois and became known as "The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated." The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC) is composed of nine (9) International Greek-letter sororities and fraternities:

## THE COLLEGIATE PANHELLENIC ASSOCIATION

<https://greeklife.wvu.edu/join/panhellenic>



The Panhellenic Association serves as the governing body for eight (8) national sororities at West Virginia University. The Council works to unite sorority women to focus on common goals and to create a network of support by providing interactive programs and activities for sorority women and all WVU students. Every sorority member belongs to the Panhellenic Association immediately upon becoming a new member. One delegate from each chapter serves on the Council, which is led by elected members from the chapters represented.



## THE MULTICULTURAL GREEK COUNCIL



The Multicultural Greek Council at West Virginia University was founded in the Spring 2019 semester with the recognition of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. Multicultural organizations each have a mission dedicated to instilling cross cultural competency and a sense of global awareness in their members.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is a fraternity or a sorority?

Fraternity and sorority organizations at West Virginia University are considered private, collaborative, and self-governing entities that freely associate and determine their own membership.

**Parents should not expect the University to resolve issues or intervene in any decision related to their student's membership, membership status, continued membership, and/or any judicial action a national or international headquarters may take related to the organization.**

A fraternity or sorority is a group of men or women bound together by brotherhood or sisterhood, common goals, and aspirations. The members that form a fraternity or sorority share their efforts, friendship, and knowledge to develop strong and creative leadership leading to success.

### 2. What are the benefits of joining a fraternity or sorority?

Students experience numerous benefits from joining a fraternity or a sorority such as developing supportive friends, engaging in a wide variety of leadership opportunities, participating in organized philanthropic and community service projects, networking for enhanced career opportunities, and becoming part of a national network.

### 3. Will joining a fraternity or sorority affect my student's academic success?

Your student's academic performance will be affected by his or her ability to manage his or her time well in addition to the amount of support they receive from the chapter they join. This is something they should ask about before they join a fraternity or sorority. Educational sessions on time management, resume writing, study skills, and more are offered and encouraged.

### 4. Are fraternity and sorority chapters diverse in their membership?

Each chapter is made up of all different kinds of people, ranging from ethnic diversity to a diversity of experiences. You will have the opportunity to learn from one another within the bonds of brother/sisterhood. Diversity is a key value of the WVU Greek community and it is celebrated openly.

### 5. What are some of the Greek traditions at WVU?

Greeks are responsible for much of the campus-wide traditions at West Virginia University! The Homecoming Floats/parade, MountaineerTHON, and the Big Greek Day of Service all originated within Fraternity & Sorority Life.

## 6. Is it time consuming to be in a fraternity or sorority?

This will vary from chapter to chapter. Typically, the semester in which you decide to become a member will be the most time intensive period for you, as this is the time that the members will go through the organization's education period. The time spent in this program will give you the opportunity to develop leadership and time management skills, learn about the history of the organization, develop friendships with others in their new member class, as well as the rest of the chapter, and allow you to become involved with other organizations. After initiation into the chapter, expectation will vary. Each chapter has weekly chapter meetings and other mandatory events throughout the year, but they are planned well in advance. In addition to the weekly meeting, the more you put into the chapter the more you will get out of being a member!

## 7. Why are fraternities and sororities considered "social"?

By their nature, fraternities and sororities are considered social because they are made up of social beings---people! One of the benefits of joining a community is that you will inherently meet new people both within your organization and outside of it. Registered mixers, community service events, formals, and date parties are all a part of the Greek tradition. Take advantage of the social nature of the group and expand your network.

## 8. Do all fraternities and sororities have chapter houses?

No, please consult the office for a current listing of fraternity and sorority housing. Also, do note that ***the University is not involved in rent collection or placement***. Many times, an alumni corporation or an independent landlord owns some of the chapter houses.

## 9. Does your student have to live in the fraternity or sorority chapter house?

The individual chapter determines living expectations in the chapter house. Each group has their own requirements and your student should ask about this during the recruitment process. Fraternity and sorority chapter house living is comparable to living in the residence halls or in an apartment. Most chapters' fees include room and meals; however, some chapters do not offer meal plans. Information about costs can be obtained from the individual fraternities and sororities. *Do note that it is an expectation (at least for the Panhellenic sororities) that a member lives in the chapter facility for at least one academic year.*

## 10. What does it usually cost to be in a fraternity or sorority?

The financial obligation of joining is used to pay chapter insurance fees, national or international dues and fees, community service events, scholarships, intramural participation, and many of the social events offered. Your student should ask about the costs before joining. We estimate that each chapter charges around \$300-\$600 per semester per member.

Every fraternity and sorority is self-supportive. Each chapter and its national headquarters determine the monthly/semester dues and membership fees. Some chapters also include a one-time association and initiation fee. Many chapters offer a payment plan. While the costs vary by chapter, the yearly expenses to live in a fraternity and sorority houses are comparable to the residence hall costs.

### 11. What is “The Divine Nine”?

There are nine historically Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLOs) that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. Collectively, these organizations are referred to as "The Divine Nine." Each of these fraternities and sororities is rich in history - ties to one or more of these organizations may be found in many college-educated Black families in the United States.

### 12. What is Recruitment (Rush)?

This is the time when fraternities and sororities seek and recruit their new members. The recruitment events are at different times for men and for women and are usually at the beginning of both the fall and spring semesters.

### 13. What is Bid Day?

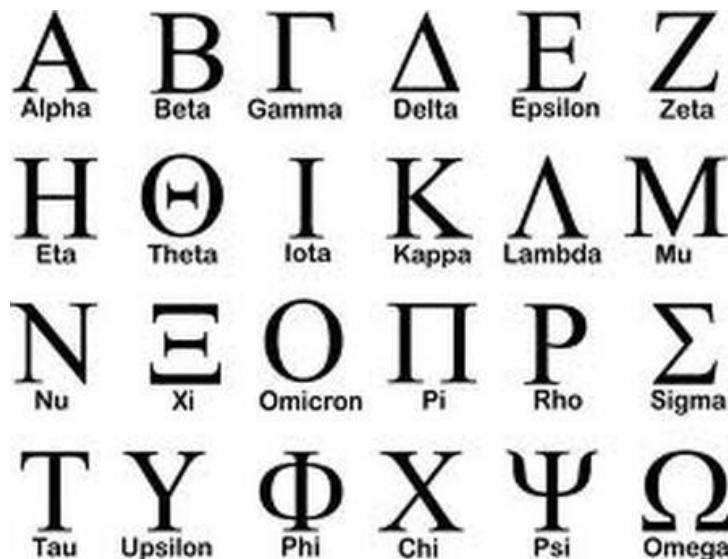
Bid Day is when men and women pick up their invitations to join a fraternity or a sorority for Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Association chapters. This is an extremely exciting time as it is the first time that your student's New Member class will come together.

### 14. What is a Probate Show, Pro-Show or Coming Out Show?

This is when historically African-American fraternities and sororities (The Divine Nine) host a public showcase to introduce their newest members to the community. This presentation may include various traditions such as, but not limited to: stepping, strolling, the recitation of poems and fraternal literature, singing, and personal testimonies describing their journey to becoming a new member.

## THE GREEK ALPHABET

The **Greek Alphabet** is a set of twenty-four letters that has been used to write the Greek language since the late 9th or early 8th century.



## DICTIONARY OF TERMS

**Active:** A student who is a fully initiated member of a fraternity or a sorority.



**Advisor:** An advisor provides guidance and support to the chapter and chapter officers or council that they oversee in several areas of operation.

**Associate/Candidate/New Member:** A student who has not been initiated and who may be serving as a “pledge” or “associate member” of a fraternity or sorority during the new member education process. This term is also used to refer to a new member of a fraternity or a sorority. After the recruitment period, new members learn the history of their national and local chapters, learn the values and principles of the group, and get to know their fellow new members and the initiated members.

**Alumni/ae:** Members of a fraternity or sorority who have graduated.

**Bid:** An invitation to join a fraternity or a sorority.

**Chapter:** A term used to refer to undergraduate fraternity or sorority students in their respective organizations. This term is also used nationally to distinguish one group of students on campus from those on another campus. Many national groups give their chapters names, such as a Greek-letter, or a combination of letters, or a Greek-letter and a state.

**Badge:** The membership pin of an initiated member.

**Big Brother or Sister:** An active member of a fraternity or sorority who serves as a mentor to a new member, guiding him or her through the new member program and initiation.

**Brother:** A term used by fraternity members to refer to one another.

**Chapter:** A local group of the larger (inter)national organization, designated by a special Greek name.

**Crossing Over (NPHC):** Becoming an initiated member of a National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. organization.

**Dean / Chapter Dean / Asst. Dean of Pledges (ADP) / Membership Intake Director (NPHC):** Those individuals who are primarily responsible for leading or assisting with the new membership intake process. These terms may vary and some may only be used to carry on tradition while some titles have changed.

**Deferred Recruitment:** West Virginia University has adopted a deferred recruitment whereby all students at the University will not be eligible for membership in a social fraternity or sorority unless the student has (1) earned a minimum of twelve (12) credits as a full-time student at the University in Morgantown, and (2) holds a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75

**Executive Office:** The central organization of a particular fraternity or sorority. Often referred to as National Headquarters, International Headquarters, or in the vernacular as “Nationals”.

**Fraternity:** A group of men or women bonded together by their ritual that contains the founding principles, ideals and aspirations of the group. Some national women’s groups normally called a “sorority” actually refer to themselves as “women’s fraternities.”

**Grad or Alumni Chapter:** The graduate chapter of NPHC organization. Usually the local grad chapter oversees the operations of the undergraduate chapter.

**Hand Sign:** A hand sign is sometimes used to identify members of the same organization. Most have a deep meaning to that organization or ritualistic symbol.

**Independent:** A person who is not a member of a fraternity or a sorority.

**Informational Meeting or Seminar (NPHC):** A meeting usually conducted by most HBGLOs to formally introduce interested individuals of a particular organization to the history and process to pursue membership.

**Initiation:** The formal ceremony that marks the beginning of active membership. Each chapter has a different set of requirements in order to be initiated.

**Intake (NPHC):** The process by which individuals pursue to gain membership into a historically Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO) under NPHC. Each BGLO determines when intake will be conducted, and thus it is not a given that more than one organization will conduct intake at the same time. Similarly, NPHC organizations do not conduct intake together. In general, NPHC organizations require sophomore status and a 2.75 cumulative GPA for someone to participate in intake.

**Legacy:** The brother or sister, son or daughter, or grandson or granddaughter of a fraternity or sorority member. Each (inter)national organization has its own policy regarding legacies.

**Line Name:** The name given to a pledge class. Some groups do number their lines by Alpha, Beta, Gamma, etc. But also their line has a name to define them. Many times it is an acronym.

**Neophyte (aka "Neo"):** A new member of a cultural Greek organization

**New Member Program:** A period of learning about fraternity and sorority life prior to initiation. This period varies for all groups but is maxed at 6 weeks at WVU.

**Philanthropy:** A charitable fundraiser or service project sponsored by a fraternity or sorority. This is not community service.

**Polemarch / Basileus (NPHC):** These terms are titles that signify the leadership role of members as presidents of HBGLOs organizations.

**Prophytes (NPHC):** Refers to the individuals who were initiated prior to that of the current or new members. They may also be loosely or affectionately referred to as "Old-Heads" upon being at least 5 plus years removed from their initial membership.

**Recruitment or Rush:** Recruitment, informally called "rush", is the time when fraternities and sororities recruit new members. IFC fraternities usually recruit the first two weeks of each semester. Panhellenic sororities usually conduct formal recruitment during the first few weeks of spring semester (for first-year students) and the first two weeks of the fall semester (for returning and transfer students). NPHC fraternities and sororities conduct what is referred to as "intake" throughout the academic year as determined by their membership and inter/national fraternity and sorority headquarters.

**Sands (NPHC):** Refers to the individuals who were initiated during the same semester.

**Sister:** A term used by sorority members to refer to one another.

**Soror (NPHC):** A term used to refer to a sister in a NPHC sorority.

**Sorority:** A group of women bonded together by their ritual that contains the founding principles, ideals and aspirations of the group. These groups are also called “women’s fraternities”.

**SPECial / SPEC (Pronounced as Spesh) (NPHC):** This is a term used to characterize the close or “special” relationship that another member of the same or different HBGLO form during the intake process. Older members of the organization choose their SPECials at their own discretion and agree to serve, continually, as a life-long role model and support system for those they choose to be their SPEC.

**Stroll or Strolling (NPHC):** Synchronized movements, usually done while being positioned in a line, which demonstrate an array of unique steps, arm and body movements that either pull from traditional moves or are influenced by pop culture. BGLOs usually have universal strolls that are known by each respective organization nation-wide or are created by the chapter’s step master or chapter members.

**Yard:** The term used by NPHC members to refer to the campus or university a chapter is located.

