

Terminology

Active - An initiated man or woman who is a college student.

Advisor - An alum member who serves as a resource for the active chapter and liaison between the alums and collegians.

Advisory Board - Members of an alumni chapter that advises the chapter.

Alumna - A sorority member who has graduated or left college (plural: alumnae).

Alumnus - A fraternity member who has graduated or left college (plural: Alumni).

Associate/New Member/Pledge - A non-initiated member in a fraternity or sorority

Badge - Also known as a pin, it is an item of jewelry given to members upon initiation. The badge is to be worn at all official functions, and upon a members death it should be returned to the sorority or fraternity headquarters. The badge must be worn with business like attire, usually over the heart and above all other pins.

Bid - A formal invitation to join an organization.

Big - Nickname for big sister or brother, a mentor assigned to a new member. Many organizations have special names for these pairings, such as Alpha Delta Pi's "Diamond Sisters" and Alpha Gamma Delta's "Sister-Mother/Sister-Daughter".

Brother - A term used by fraternity men in reference to one another.

Call - A yell used mostly by NPHC organizations (although some NIC, NPC and local orgs have calls as well). Used to identify and greet brothers and sisters. For example, Alpha Kappa Alpha's call is SKEE-WEE. Non-members are not permitted to use the call.

Candidate - A person who will potentially be inducted into an organization.

Candlelight - A formal announcement of a sister being lavaliered, pinned, or engaged; that is kept secret until that sister blows out a candle that is passed around the circle of sisters.

Chapter - The local group of an international organization.

Chapter Advisor - an alumnus who establishes and maintains a close advisory relationship with a chapter and serves as a teacher, counselor, and friend.

Chapter Total - The maximum number of members to which a sorority chapter can recruit.

Colony - A newly organized group working to become a chartered chapter.

Colors - The official pair or triad of colors that represent a specific Greek organization.

Continuous Open Recruitment - Also known as COR. If a sorority does not reach the membership ceiling (aka total) during formal recruitment, they may hold an informal recruitment, and offer bids to potential new members. Formerly called Continuous Open Bidding (COB).

CPC – Collegiate Panhellenic Council UIC’s Panhellenic sororities

Community Service -Hands-on activities directly benefiting others.

Crest - Insignia used by sorority and fraternity members. Most Greek organizations reserve the crest for initiated members only. Each crest has hidden, secret meanings behind it; also known as a coat of arms or shield.

De-pledge - the termination of an associate member's relationship with a fraternity or sorority.

Dirty Rushing - When one organization will attempt to influence a potential new member through gifts, bad mouthing other organizations etc; forbidden by all Panhellenic Councils.

Dry Rush/Recruitment - The practice of not serving alcoholic beverages at any rush/recruitment function.

Dues - Charge of joining a fraternity or sorority; Covers costs of operation, formal events, activities and other events.

Expansion - When an organization is looking to expand and open a chapter at a new school.

Faculty Advisor - A member of the faculty or administration who establishes and maintains a close advisory relationship with a chapter and its scholarship program. The Faculty Advisor is not necessarily an initiate of the particular organization.

Faculty Initiate - A member of the faculty or governing board of a college or university who is initiated into full membership of an organization.

Family - Multiple generations of big brothers or sisters, brought together to form a family line.

Formal - A dance and dinner that organizations sponsor for their members.

Formal Rush - The period of time set aside for structured recruitment.

Founders Day - An event celebrated by fraternities and sororities to highlight the founding of their organization and celebrate its history. It's not necessarily held on the day the organization was founded.

Frat – 1. A nickname for fraternity that can be seen as offensive (He's a frat boy!).
2. Term used by NPHC fraternity members towards one another (I saw my frat at the union.)

Fraternity - The name that applies to male chapters and is characterized by a ritual, a pin, and a strong bond of friendship.

Fraternal Information and Programming Group (F.I.P.G.) - A group of national/international fraternities which have grouped together to form a uniform risk management policy in order to obtain adequate liability insurance.

Greek - Greek in this sense means a member of a fraternity or sorority.

G-PAAC – Greeks of the Pan Asian American Council: UIC's council for Asian American Interest fraternities and sororities.

Greek Week - An organized week of activities including games, competitions and sing- songs.

GLO - Greek Letter Organization, or a sorority or fraternity.

Handshake - It's a special handshake unique to each organization. Only initiate members will know the handshake; also known as a grip.

Hazing - Any act performed by a member of any GLO that is likely to cause harm, danger, causes public embarrassment or shame, compromise's a persons' dignity, causes the person to be the object of ridicule, cause psychological harm, or is illegal. Hazing is against the law in all states, and is against the principles of all sororities and fraternities

House/Floor - The structure in which organizations reside or socialize together.

Inactive Member - A member who has elected to become inactive in sorority or fraternity life. They have no say or participation in chapter activities.

Initiate - A person who has recently learned the ritual of a fraternity or sorority and is a full member.

Initiation - A formal ceremony during which a man or woman begins full membership in an organization.

Interfraternity Council (IFC) - The representative body of men's fraternities.

Intake - Term for the process by which NPHC members are selected to become pledges of an organization. Intake can be much more secretive than recruitment or rush.

Intentional Single Preference - When a prospective member only puts down one choice on her preference card. This sometimes lessens the chances of her getting a bid, and isn't recommended. Also called Suiciding.

Interest Group - A group of individuals on campus in the first stage of the process leading to installation as a chapter of a Greek-letter organization.

Lavaliere - A necklace with the sorority letters, often worn by members. Lavaliering is a process where a fraternity member would give his lavalier to his girlfriend, as a sign of a serious relationship. Depending on the campus, this can be equal to "pinning".

Legacy - A rushee whose grandparents, parents, sister/brother is a member of a particular organization.

Letters - The first Greek letter of each Greek word that makes up the name of the fraternity or sorority are often displayed on clothing. For example, Phi Kappa Psi's letters are FKY. Some organizations don't allow new members to wear letters (only the name spelled out).

Little/Lil - Nickname for a Big's new member that they mentor.

Line - An NPHC/NALFO/GPAAC term somewhat equal to a pledge class. They are the potential new members of the organization. Lines are often given names.

Local - A GLO which is not part of a national organization. Locals may have one chapter, or a few.

Mascot - A symbol, usually an animal, chosen to represent a Greek letter organization. Many organizations have symbols and mascots, such as Phi Sigma Sigma's sphinx symbol and Kappa Alpha Psi's diamond.

Mixer/Exchange - A party between a sorority and fraternity, often involving themes or games.

National - A sorority or fraternity's national headquarters. Usually erroneously called "national", as most organizations are international, having chapters outside of the US.

National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) - The National Organization for Latino Organizations.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) - The national organization for all historically African- American organizations.

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) - The international organization composed of 26 women's fraternities.

Neophyte - New member of an NPHC/NALFO/GPAAC organization. Also called a Neo.

New Member - a member of a sorority or fraternity who has not been initiated (also called associate member or pledge).

New Member Class - The group of new members that will be going through the New Member Program and Initiation together. Formerly called a pledge class, this term is still used among the fraternities.

New Member Period - The time during which new members learn about their organization, its members, and their activities.

New Member Pin - A distinctive badge worn on the chest designating a new member of a particular fraternity or sorority for the period of time between bid acceptance and initiation. Most organizations require the new member to return the new member pin at initiation in exchange for their member pin.

North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) - The international organization composed of over 50 men's fraternities.

Open Motto - A short phrase that describes the purpose or outlook of a fraternity or sorority, and is available for all to read. Many organizations also have a Creed or Purpose in addition to an Open Motto, as well as a motto that is only for initiated members.

Order of Omega - An honor society for Greek members who demonstrate outstanding leadership and academic achievement.

Panhellenic Council - The local coordinating and governing organization for women's sororities.

Philanthropy - Endeavors raising money for charitable organizations.

Pinning - Term for a fraternity member giving his pin or a sweetheart pin to his girlfriend. Often a precursor to an engagement.

Potential New Member - A man or woman who is going through the rush/recruitment process.

Preference - The final parties held by sororities during Recruitment. They are fancier than the previous parties and usually include a ritual that potential new members can participate in. Also known as Pref, or Final Dinners

Preference Cards - Potential new members sign this after the pref parties, indicating in order, which sororities of the ones whose parties they attended they liked the most. These cards, along with the sororities lists of members they would like, are used to match the PNM's and sororities with one another in a mutually selective process.

Prophyte - An older member of an NPHC/NALFO/GPAAC organization.

Quota - A specified number of rushees that each sorority may pledge.

Recommendation - A letter signed by an alumna/alumnus recommending a rushee for membership.

Ritual - A secret ceremony of a greek organization. Also, the formal document that contains the secret principles and ideals upon which the GLO was founded. Ritual elements are sacred to each sorority and fraternity and have been handed down through the generations. Only initiate members may be privy to rituals.

Rush/Recruitment - An organized activity to meet potential members.

Recruitment Counselor - A member who leads a recruitment group. During recruitment they disaffiliate from their sorority/fraternity so that they will not bias the potential new members. Formerly known as rho chi's, the new official term is Sigma Rho Chi (Sorority Recruitment Counselor). Many campuses have their own term, such as Pi Chi (Panhellenic Counselor), Rho Gamma (Recruitment Guide), Rho Alpha (Recruitment Advisor), Gamma Chi (Greek Counselor), Greek Life Guide, Alpha Chi, Pi Rho Chi etc etc.

Sands - An NPHC term for members of your new member class. Comes from the phrase "cross the burning sands" which means to cross over into full membership.

Sister - A term used by sorority members in reference to one another.

Ship- Term often used by NPHC organization in Illinois, Iowa and Missouri denoting members of the same pledge class.

Snap bid - A bid given to a PNM who was not placed during bid matching. The PNM would be on the sorority's list, but that PNM did not list the sorority on her bid card. Many schools will not allow someone who suicides to receive a snap bid. Some schools will allow a person who had to drop out of recruitment to receive a snap bid.

Soror - Term used by NPHC sorority members towards one another. Rarely used among NPC sororities.

Sorority - The name that applies to female chapters and is characterized by a ritual, a pin, and a strong bond of friendship.

Step Show - A show performed by various organizations. Also called Stepping.

Sweetheart - Sorority member chosen to serve as Sweetheart of a fraternity, usually chosen because of work she's done with the fraternity.

Total/Ceiling - The maximum number of members a sorority can have. Sororities can only exceed ceiling during formal recruitment, if for example, taking quota would put them at 62 members and total is 60.

