XVII. Greek Life Policies

Greek letter organizations have traditionally assumed a very active role in contributing to the cultural, educational, and social life on Mercer’s campus. Sororities and fraternities are involved in educational programs, community service and philanthropic projects, and leadership development, in addition to providing a strong bond of friendship. The Panhellenic Council governs the four sororities represented at Mercer that are members of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC); the Interfraternity Council (IFC) governs the eight fraternities represented at Mercer that are members of the North-American Interfraternity Conference, Fraternal Leadership Association or Phi Delta Theta; and the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) represents the three sororities and two fraternities at Mercer that are members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. In addition to the guidelines below, Greek organizations will be held accountable to all policies found in the “Community of Respect” section of The Lair. When different, the Office of Campus Life/Greek Life policies supersede all council specific policies.

In order to foster community among the Greek organizations and to maintain close ties with the broader Mercer campus, all Greek organizations will reside in the Greek Village. Greek organizations maintain their recognized organizational status on Mercer’s campus by residing in campus housing known as the Greek Village, by demonstrating effective stewardship of those facilities, and by meeting all financial obligations resulting from the occupancy and upkeep of their houses. Please see the Greek Village Debt Policy and Greek Village Housing Lease for details. Any Greek organization that loses its university housing privilege for any reason also forfeits its status as a recognized Greek organization on Mercer’s campus. Exemptions may be granted for special circumstances by the Vice President and Dean of Students. Please note that only initiated members of the chapter can reside in the Greek Village. Freshman may not reside in Greek Village (status not based on credit hours).

For all Greek Life policies, please visit www.mercer.edu/greek

In addition to the guidelines below, Greek organizations will be held accountable to all FIPG, Inc. policies and procedures.

A. Membership Requirements for Greek Organizations

1. Requirements to Participate in Recruitment or Intake:
   a) All first-year students are welcome to participate in Formal Recruitment activities of Panhellenic and IFC.
   b) Each council has adopted its own GPA requirements for potential members. Please refer to that council’s guidelines for potential new member GPA guidelines.
   c) Each council/chapter has adopted its own guidelines related to community service and recommendation letters for potential new members. Please refer to that chapter or council’s guidelines for specific information.
   d) All second-year students (who have 30 credit hours or more and a minimum of 15 having been obtained at Mercer) may seek membership in an NPHC organization. Intakes are held throughout the year.
   e) Potential new members of any chapter must be a student at the Mercer Macon campus and reside in or near Macon without exception.

2. Requirements to be Initiated:
   a) Greek organizations that have GPA and hour requirements for new members must conform to the standards of their Inter/national headquarters or those of Panhellenic, IFC, NPHC; whichever is higher.
   b) All fraternities and sororities must request a verification of academic qualifications of all prospective initiates from the Panhellenic, IFC or NPHC Advisor prior to initiating any Mercer student. Students that do not meet the council standards may not be initiated into the chapter and included on the chapter roster or live in Greek Village.
   c) Greek organizations earning a semester grade point average during the most recent grading period which is below the Non-Greek Men’s Average or Non-Greek Women’s average must hold a shortened new member education program and initiate new members prior to the end of the term during which they pledge. If an organization exceeds the Non-Greek Men’s or Non-Greek Women’s average during the most recent grading period, they may wait until all grades are published before holding initiation but must initiate within the first two weeks of the following term.
   d) All fraternities and sororities must register all new member periods/intakes and pre-initiation/initiation activities with the Office of Campus Life BEFORE a process can begin. Please submit the appropriate form to the Office of Campus Life. The form can be found on the Greek Life website. No initiation activities may be conducted during Dead Week or the final examination period. Unless a chapter’s national office...
requires a chapter to wait for grades (please submit a letter from that office) then all chapters must initiate or complete intake by this time. A **new member period must conclude 15 days before the last day of class unless a chapter is required to wait for grades (please submit letter).** NPHC chapters should also notify the council advisor and the Office of Campus Life one week before a probate is to occur. Details must be approved by the council advisor.

**B. Membership Recruitment of Greek Organizations**

Many Greek organizations participate in Formal Recruitment at the beginning of fall semester, although they are encouraged to recruit throughout the academic year as permitted by IFC, Panhellenic, and NPHC. In addition to the guidelines defined by IFC, Panhellenic and NPHC regarding ethical recruitment standards and the acceptable time periods for recruitment activities, organizations shall adhere to the following guidelines: (1) No recruitment activities may be held during University orientation periods and (2) No recruitment activity may be held on a weeknight after 11:00pm. **Additionally, all recruitment activities must be dry (non-alcoholic) functions.**

**C. Academic Requirements for Greek Organizations**

The Interfraternity/NPHC Council Policy for the Promotion of Scholastic Achievement requires all Greek organizations at Mercer to maintain a term grade point average of the entire membership which is no lower than a 2.50 in order to remain in good standing. Panhellenic follows the Green Book rules which allow each chapter to set their GPA requirements but no chapter may fall below the 2.5 minimum standard set by Mercer’s Office of Greek Life.

**For the Summer/Fall 2012:**

- Effective summer 2012: all Greek organizations that are below a 2.5 will be under a “**grace period**” and receive a written warning from the Associate Dean of Students outlining the GPA policy and possible sanctions associated if the chapter GPA is not brought above a 2.5. This will be the only grace period for chapters.
- Effective summer 2012 all Greek organizations who have a 2.6 chapter GPA will be sent a letter reminding the chapter of the minimum requirement and encouraging the chapter to work on scholastics with all members so they do not fall below the required 2.5 semester average.

- **Level 1: Academic Probation.** Each semester grades will be reviewed to determine compliance. Greek organizations below a 2.5 will be placed on Academic Probation.
  - A letter from the Associate Dean of Students will be sent to the organization, advisors, regionals/nationals offices.
  - Semester grades will be reviewed for each chapter to determine academic good standing.
  - A meeting will be scheduled with the Chapter president, advisor, Greek Council advisor, their scholarship chair and the Associate Dean of Students to develop a **Study Plan** for the organization.
    - The Study Plan may include chapter study hours, recommendations to attend academic support resources on campus, have study skills and test taking workshops for all members of the chapter, etc.
  - Chapters must track compliance of the study plan using a simple form that can be obtained in the Office of Campus Life.
  - A **contract** will be created between the organization and the Campus Life Office (which will be monitored by the Associate Dean of Students), and the details must be met even if the chapter increases their GPA through other methods.
  - At the end of the spring semester, grades will be checked for the chapter/s on Level 1 probation to determine if the chapter has met the required 2.5 chapter average.

- **Level 2: Social Probation.** If a chapter fails to comply under the Level 1 plan, another meeting will be held with the organization and its representatives and correspondence sent to the regional/national office. Social probation **may** include any or all of the following restrictions for the organization until academic compliance requirements are met. Chapters may be prohibited from having:
• All social activities on or off campus, which includes, but is not limited to the following:
  Chapter week, pageants, homecoming activities, intramurals, stomp fest, awards, formals,
mixers, philanthropies, etc. or anything else determined appropriate by the Office of
Campus Life and administrative staff.
• Exceptions would include one chapter meeting a week with a chapter advisor present for
these meetings.
  o Level 3: Suspension. Semester GPA’s are checked for all chapters on probation at any level.
  Chapters that have not brought their semester GPA at or above the 2.5 minimum and are already
on social probation (meaning three semesters below the GPA requirement) may be placed on
suspension. Suspension may be considered at this point, but would not be automatic. Decisions
would depend on the dynamics of why the organization has failed to meet good academic
standing and include a thorough investigation as to the reason. This would be reviewed by
the Office of Campus Life and the Greek Life Committee.
  ▪ The chapter may be restricted from being an active organization for at least one year and
not permitted to live in the chapter house, which would be contingent upon the timing
that social probation is determined as an appropriate form of recourse to address low
academic performance.
  ▪ Once the chapter regains good academic standing (GPA will be checked at the end of
each semester), it would be placed back as an active organization and monitored in
accordance with this policy.

*Note. Any acts of failure to comply with guidelines outlined for organizations may be referred to the Office of
Judicial Education for review under our Student Code of Conduct.

D. Reporting Requirements for Greek Organizations
In order to remain in good standing, Mercer requires that all Greek organizations file the following reports and
documentation with the Office of Campus Life. Forms are available in the office and online.
  **Please see the Schedule of Requirements for both Campus Life and Residence Life on the website for the
complete list and timeline:
  a) Membership rosters must be filed within 30 days of the beginning of each semester. Active, initiated
members and new members must be designated clearly on the roster. Any changes or additions to the
roster must be made within one week of the change and no later than the last day of class each semester.
Examples of changes to the roster include newly initiated members or disaffiliated members.
  b) Officer and Advisor rosters and forms must be updated within one week following elections, when changes
are made during the semester, and/or within 14 days of the beginning of each semester. All Greek
organizations must list a Chapter Advisor and Faculty Advisor on their rosters.
  c) The Grade release and Hazing Policy form must be filed with the Office of Campus Life in order for an
organization to have access to its members’ grades. These forms must be filed immediately after new
member recruitment programs, as well as within 14 days of the beginning of each semester to be turned in
with the Chapter Roster and Advisor Information. Attached to the chapter roster. The scholarship
chairperson is responsible for reviewing the organization’s grade release forms each semester to make sure
the forms are up-to-date.
  d) ALL INDIVIDUALS SELECTED AS CANDIDATES FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP OF A GREEK
ORGANIZATION MUST ATTEND A MANDATORY WORKSHOP ON HAZING, ALCOHOL and
SEXUAL ASSAULT and MUST SIGN ASSOCIATED PAPERWORK BEFORE BEGINNING A NEW
MEMBER PROCESS OF ANY KIND. PLEASE WORK CLOSELY WITH THE COUNCIL ADVISOR
TO SCHEDULE THESE FOR ALL NEW MEMBERS EACH SEMESTER.
  e) The following documentation must also be on file with the Office of Campus Life at the beginning of the
Fall semester and as changes or renewals take place:
  a. chapter by-laws
  b. requirements for membership
  c. procedures for disaffiliating members in any category;
  d. statements of dues and fees;
  e. new member education programs
  f. grade releases for all potential new members

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g. risk management policies
h. liability insurance policies and certificate of coverage
i. chapter calendar for the current semester
j. awards information
k. new member period/intake forms
l. new members – hazing/alcohol/sexual assault workshop paperwork and tests
m. anything else as deemed necessary by Office of Campus Life, Office of Housing and Residence Life or Student Affairs

f) All Greek organizations must maintain a house on campus with a current and active lease agreement, unless an exemption has been made with Student Affairs, the Office of Campus Life and the Office of Housing and Residence Life. Please note that only initiated members of the chapter can reside in the Greek Village. Freshman may not reside in Greek Village (status not based on credit hours).

E. Leadership Requirements

1. Council Presidents:
   Students who are interested in being elected to the position of President of any of the Mercer University Interfraternity, Panhellenic or NPHC Councils must demonstrate the following in order to be eligible:
   a) They are a full-time enrolled student at Mercer University, Macon campus (12 credit hours).
   b) They have a minimum cumulative grade point average equal to or above the All Greek Average cumulative grade point average.
   c) They must be in good standing with their individual chapters, inter/national organizations and Mercer University.
   d) Complete and submit a semester update report to the council Advisor.
   e) Attend the President’s Roundtable two times per semester.
   f) Attend required events set forth by the council advisor.

2. Chapter Presidents:
   Students who are elected President of their respective chapters must demonstrate the following:
   a) Meet with the council advisor/s and chapter advisor once per semester.
   b) Attend the President’s Roundtable twice per semester.
   c) Attend required events set forth by the council advisor.

F. Probation Policy

If the required information, documentation and leadership requirements are not met, or the chapter is found to be in violation of any Greek Life Policies the chapter will be placed on Probation unless other procedures are outlined (see academic standards). Probation means that the recognized Greek Chapter is permitted to remain registered only upon the condition that it complies with all university rules and regulations and with other standards of conduct which the organization is directed to observe for the duration of the period of the probation.

Probation may not exceed two semesters in duration for any given misconduct, except that violation of probationary conditions may be cause for extension of the probation for no more than two additional semesters or for suspension of some rights.

**At any time if a chapter violates a University policy or code of conduct the chapter will be subject to the Mercer University judicial process as outlined in the Lair.

Probation may include the suspension of some of the organization's rights such as but not limited to:

1. Disciplinary Warning: A disciplinary warning is an official written notice expressing disapproval of conduct and a statement that the conduct violates one or more University rules or regulations.
2. Probation: A chapter can be placed on probation for a specified period of time without the withdrawal of privileges granted to university organizations. For example, up to 30 days or less depending on the submission of missing material. Probation is a period of review during which the student or organization must demonstrate the ability to comply with Greek Life policies and regulations, and all other stipulated requirements.
3. **Restricted Probation**: A chapter placed on probation may be restricted from use of university facilities and/or all other university granted privileges afforded Greek organizations such as the right to reserve a space on campus for meetings or events, or the right to hold events on or off-campus.

4. **Withdrawal of Recognition**: A chapter may have its recognition withdrawn for a specified period of time depending on the offense and the outcome of the investigation.

5. **Other**: Any sanction noted in the Student Code of Conduct if the chapter is put through the Judicial Process.

*The disciplinary action taken against a Recognized Greek Organization does not exempt disciplinary action from being taken against individual members of the organization who were responsible for the violations of regulations and policies*

**F. Starting a New Greek Organization:**

**Philosophy:**
Mercer University is committed to striving for excellence, including fostering a strong and united Greek community on our campus. Inviting and maintaining chapters with strong ideals and values that contribute to the Mercer community is important. Mercer strives to find a good balance of IFC, PHC and NPHC chapters on campus. The following are the current policies in regards to expansion/extension.

In order to foster community among the Greek organizations and to maintain close ties with the broader Mercer campus, Greek organizations will reside in the Greek Village. Exception to this policy will only be granted as outlined hereafter. Greek organizations maintain their recognized organizational status on Mercer’s campus by residing in campus housing known as the Greek Village, by demonstrating effective stewardship of those facilities, and by meeting all financial obligations resulting from the occupancy and upkeep of their houses.

**Requirements for All Interested Chapters:**
To become a recognized Greek organization on the Mercer University, Macon campus, the petitioning student group must be a member of one of the four national groups (National Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., North-American Interfraternity Conference or the National Multicultural Greek Council, Inc.), must submit a roster of members (a minimum of 7 full-time, undergraduate Mercer students on the Macon campus), representing different class standings, and each with a minimum cumulative grade point average which meets the standard of the council they will be a part of, when contacting the Office of Campus Life.

**Request**
1. Expansion/extension can be brought about in three ways:
   a. A student interest group can approach the Director of Campus Life and the local governing councils for recognition
   b. A national organization can contact the Director of Campus Life to express their interest in the university
   c. The governing councils at Mercer may petition to the Director of Campus Life when they would like to expand

**Required Documents**
2. Once the interest is expressed in any of the three ways, an expansion committee consisting of members from each of the governing councils, the Director of Campus Life, Assistant Director of Campus Life, Housing and Residence Life representative, a faculty member and the Associate Dean of Students will meet to examine the current balance of chapters, student trends in recruitment, size of student population, and housing availability in order to determine the need or ability to expand within the council being discussed. At which point if the decision has been made that the council is ready to and in favor of expanding, the following information must be presented to the Office of Campus Life in order to proceed in the process.
   a. History of the Organization
   b. Expansion/Extension packet: (needs to make sure to include)
      1) Risk Management Policies
      2) Proof of Liability Insurance
      3) Letter of National Support
      4) Scholarship Information
      5) Educational Programs (Drugs, Alcohol, Hazing, Sexual Assault)
      6) New Member Education Process

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Constitution/By Laws
List of interested students
List of who would be the Alumni Advisor and Faculty/Staff Advisor
Alumni support in the area
Timeline for expansion
Letter of support for the Mercer Greek Community, values and procedures
Letter of support for the local governing council
Philanthropy Information
Programs and efforts typical of the organization
If the organization had been on Mercer’s campus in the past, proof must be established that the organization is in good standing with the university regarding judicial and financial matters

Greek Village
1. All Greek Organizations must maintain a house on Mercer’s campus in the Greek Village in order to establish and maintain their status as a Social Greek organization, except where otherwise stated or except those groups that have received an exemption following Greek Life policies. Any Greek organization that loses its university housing privilege for any reason also forfeits its status as a recognized Greek organization on Mercer’s campus. The University will not, at any time recognize any chapter house off campus. Exception: In the event there are more chapters than houses available, chapters may request to be exempt from living in the Greek Village, and to reside in another residence hall (apartment/suite) in order to allow their recognition as a Greek organization. This exemption must be granted by the Office of Housing and Residence Life, Office of Campus Life and Student Affairs. Exceptions of this nature will only be granted for specific circumstances including member numbers below the required amount to fill the chapter house.

Process:
Step 1: Once the expansion/extension packet and information is received, the committee will meet to discuss the submitted information and decide whether more information is needed or if they would like to invite the organization(s) to campus to present to the committee and current Greek chapters.

Step 2: After the presentation, feedback will be provided by the chapters and a recommendation will be made from the committee to either extend an invitation to join the Mercer Greek community or not to expand at that time. The Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students has the final authority in the recommendation decided upon by the committee.
.a. If an invitation is extended to a chapter, the chapter will work closely with the Director of Campus Life and the respective council to revise and adhere to the expansion/extension plan.
.b. If an invitation is not extended to a chapter, a letter briefly stating the committee’s rationale will be sent to the interested chapter(s).

Step 3:
.a. For Interfraternity Council Organizations: Upon the recommendation of the IFC and with the approval of the Vice President of Student Affairs, the IFC Advisor will then follow the procedure for expansion as outlined within the Mercer University Interfraternity Council Constitution and By-Laws.
.b. For Panhellenic Council Organizations: Upon the recommendation of the Panhellenic Council and with the approval of the Vice President of Student Life, the Panhellenic Advisor will then follow the procedure for extension as outlined with the National Panhellenic Conference.
.c. For National Pan-Hellenic Council Organizations: Upon the recommendation of the University, NPHC will then follow the procedure for colonization as outlined by that organizations inter/national headquarters and the expansion policies of Mercer University.
.d. For National Multicultural Greek Council Organizations: Upon the recommendation of the University, MGC will then follow the procedure for colonization as outlined by their By Laws and that organizations inter/national headquarters and the expansion policies of Mercer University.
.e. The Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students has the power to overrule the individual councils on their recommendation either to expand or not to expand.

Step 4: Upon the Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Student’s approval of the expansion committee and council’s recommendation, the Director of Campus Life will re-review the required documentation of the organization selected to join the Greek system at Mercer and upon approval will extend an invitation to join the Mercer Greek Community.

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The Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students makes the final decision in regards to expansion/extension, and any part of this process may be adjusted at his or her discretion.

G. Exemptions to the Housing Requirement:

2. Chapters may request a one year exemption from the Greek Housing policy if the chapter size consists of 9 or fewer members or 3 or fewer members for NPHC. This request must be submitted in writing to the Office of Campus Life and Housing and Residence Life by the end of the semester prior to the year the exemption is being requested.
   a. The exemption is only good for one year. At the end of the year, the chapter will be examined to determine whether or not they are financially able and of the appropriate size to fill a house. If the chapter is still at or below 10 members, they may request a year extension to the exemption.
   b. In the event of an issue mid-year, the chapter must work closely with the Office of Housing and Residence Life to determine the most appropriate course of action for the chapter and the housing office.

3. In the event there are more chapters than houses available, chapters may request to be exempt from living in the Greek Village, and to reside in another residence hall (apartment/suite) in order to maintain their recognition as a Greek organization. Permission will be granted only if there is a chapter of equal or greater size who is financially able and willing to move into their house. This would occur only in the case of expansion where more chapters than houses available.

4. At no time will a chapter be able to apply for exemption from living in the Greek Village if there is an open house, except if they are exempt under Exemption 1 for chapter size. If a chapter is currently residing in another residence hall and a house becomes open, they will be required to move into the house in the Greek Village in order to maintain 100% Greek occupancy in the Greek Village.
   a. Any chapter that does not occupy a house within the Greek Village or other University owned housing and does not have an exemption in writing, as agreed upon with the Office of Campus Life and the Office of Housing and Residence Life, will be in violation of Mercer’s Greek Life polices and will forfeit its recognition as a Greek Chapter.

5. For more information regarding the Greek Housing Exemption due to having fewer than 10 members, please see contact the Office of Campus Life or the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

H. Greek Life Self-reporting Policy

Under the Community of Respect, organizations are expected to investigate and self-report violations of the student code of conduct to the Office of Campus Life. Groups that quickly and accurately self-disclose policy violations will be given due consideration by Student Affairs in determining corresponding or additional disciplinary action by the University. Reports should contain a full account of what occurred, who was involved, any sanctions imposed by the organization, and how the completion of the sanctions will be verified. However, the university retains the right at any point to pursue further action in either investigating the incident, implementing additional sanctions, or pursuing individual charges in any case.