

## **Glossary of Fraternity and Sorority Organization Terms**

**Active** - A person who has been initiated into a lifelong membership in a Fraternal organization. Traditionally, it has designated a member who is currently an undergraduate.

**Active Chapter** - An individual, chartered campus-based subordinate unit of a national Fraternal organization.

**Alumna** - A sorority member who is a non-student. Plural: Alumnae.

**Alumnus** - A fraternity member who is a non-student. Plural: Alumni (which is also used to describe a mixed group).

**Alumni Chapter** - An organization of Greek-lettered alumni from an individual fraternity or sorority; usually related or representing a geographical area or city.

**Alumni Advisory Committee** - A committee or group of alumni sharing chapter advising responsibilities, usually with each alumnus assigned to a specific area of chapter operations (such as finances).

**Aspirant** - A person who has accepted the bid of a Fraternal organization, received the associate member pin, and is engaged in preparing for initiation, but who has not yet been initiated into full membership.

**Associate Member** - Refers to a member chapter of a Fraternity and Sorority Life council. These chapters are fully recognized by their respective governing council. Associate membership has limited duties and responsibilities to the governing council.

**Badge** - The symbol worn by the initiated member of a Fraternal organization.

**Bid of Membership** - An invitation to join a Fraternal organization.

**Big and Little** - A formal mentoring relationship between an older member of a given organization and a younger member (not necessarily in terms of age) .

**Brother** (alt., Frat, or Frater) - An initiated member of a fraternity. It is used as a term of address when an initiated member refers to another member.

**Campus Presentation** (sometimes referred to as Coming Out, Probate Show or Neophyte presentation) - A term used by some NPHC groups to designate the time when new members of such groups come out to the campus. Those joining an NPHC group are generally not known and thus it is a time when the new members are revealed. A history of the national organization, founding principles, chapter history, chapter lineage, and traditional hymns, and poems, along with stepping are typically demonstrated as well as testimonials from the new members. Parents and other students are generally in attendance.

**Chapter** - A term used to refer to undergraduate fraternity or sorority students in a particular Fraternal organization. This term is also used nationally to distinguish one group of students on a particular 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.

**Chapter Advisor** - An individual who establishes and maintains a close advisory relationship with a chapter and serves as a teacher, counselor and friend. The chapter advisor is not necessarily an initiate of the particular Fraternal organization.

**Collegiate Panhellenic Council (Panhel)** - The umbrella and governing organization for National Panhellenic Conference or other non-honorary sororities at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Colony or provisional chapter** - A student organization in the final stage prior to being installed as a chartered chapter of a Fraternal organization.

**Coming Out (sometimes referred to as Probate or Neophyte presentation)** - A term used by some NPHC groups to designate the time when new members of such groups come out to the campus. Those joining an NPHC group are generally not known and thus it is a time when the new members are revealed. Typically stepping is demonstrated as well as testimonials from the new members. Parents and other students are generally in attendance.

**Crossing** - A term used by National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) groups to indicate that an aspirant has been fully initiated into the group. Crossing is sometimes referred to as “crossing the (burning) sands.”

**Divine Nine** - Term used to describe the nine NPHC affiliate organizations.

**Dry Recruitment** - The practice of not serving alcoholic beverages at recruitment functions which is a requirement of all chapters at the University of Pittsburgh

**Event Monitor** - Members of chapter responsible for the management of a chapter’s Restricted Event. Monitor will be a non-drinking participant of the event and an initiated chapter member.

**Formal Recruitment** - The major recruitment period of the year with specific scheduled events. The most concentrated period within formal recruitment for entertaining and selecting new members is sometimes known as “Recruitment Week.”

**Fraternity** - An individual men’s Fraternal organization traditionally denoted by Greek letters, especially a general college fraternity (as distinguished from an honor, professional, or recognition fraternity or society) and the term applied to all Fraternal organizations. Some sororities are identified as a fraternity in their official name; others describe themselves as being a “women’s fraternity.”

**Graduate Chapter** - An organization of Fraternal organization alumni/ae from an individual fraternity or sorority; usually related or representing a geographical area or city.

**Grip** - Secret handshake exchanged by members of organizations.

**Hazing** – Refer to University of Pittsburgh Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures.

**House** - a chapter's physical facility which serves as its home.

**House Corporation** - A legal entity holding title to any real property (land and buildings) for a chapter's living/meeting purposes. This alumni body has basic responsibilities relative to property ownership, maintenance and management.

**House Director** - A person, residing in a chapter house, who oversees the day to day operations chapter house.

**Informal Recruitment** - A year-round period of continuous, open rush with no specific, scheduled, system-wide activities of rushing and pledging. Bids may be extended and accepted at any time. This is also known as "Open recruitment."

**Initiation** - A ritualistic ceremony in which a new member becomes an initiated lifelong member of a Fraternal organization.

**Intake** - The term NPHC groups use when they bring new members into their organization. Each NPHC group determines when they will conduct intake, and thus no two NPHC groups will conduct intake together. Each group is assisted in this process by their Graduate Chapter (a group of alumni/ae in the Pittsburgh area). In general, NPHC groups require sophomore status and a 2.50 cumulative GPA for someone to go through intake.

**Interfraternity Council (IFC)** - The umbrella and governing organization for fraternities at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Legacy** - An undergraduate relative of a Fraternal organization member.

**Line** - A name for a group of men or women joining a Historically Black Fraternity or Sorority (an NPHC group). Being "on line" is a term for when a student is joining an NPHC group. In 1990 all 9 NPHC groups prohibited "pledging" and began a process called intake (see definition above).

**Local** - A Fraternal group which exists on a campus but which has no affiliation with a national Fraternal organization.

**Neophyte** (i.e., Neo) - A new member of an NPHC organization.

**New Member** – A person who has been accepted as a probationary member of a sorority or fraternity. After the recruitment period, new members learn the history of their national and local chapters, learn the ideals and principles of the group; get to know their fellow new members and get to know the initiated members.

**NIC** (North American Interfraternity Conference) - The national group of 73 men's fraternities in North America.

**NPC** (National Panhellenic Conference) - The national group of 26 women's sororities in North America. Representatives from each national sorority get together to support and promote sororities across North America.

**NPHC** (National Pan - Hellenic Council, Inc.) - The national group of the 9 historically African-American fraternities (5) and sororities (4) in North America and beyond. The umbrella and governing organization at the University of Pittsburgh for the historically African-American fraternities and sororities at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Order of Omega** - National Greek Leadership Honor Society - Limited to top 3% of Fraternity and Sorority members at the University of Pittsburgh. Must have a 3.00 GPA, junior or senior status, significant leadership and service to the campus and Fraternity and Sorority Life. Applications are accepted each semester, with the current student members selecting the new members. Students that are selected pay a one-time fee, for which they receive a certificate and a pin.

**Open House** - A time free of specific, scheduled activities when a potential new member can visit any Fraternal organization. An "Open House" is also an individual chapter's reception or similar event to honor a person, celebrate a milestone, etc.

**Pinning** - The practice of a fraternity member giving his member's badge to a woman OR referring to the ceremony where a new member receives his or her pledge-pin.

**Plot** - A section of the campus where NPHC groups have sections to display their symbols. This area acts as a place where undergraduates and graduates (alumni) gather when on the campus. Plots are very common at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Plots are not as common at Predominately White Institutions (PWI's).

**Potential New Member (PNM)** – Students who are interested in receiving an invitation for membership to a Fraternal organization.

**Preferential Bidding** - A system used (primarily by sororities) to conclude recruitment with the organizations and potential new members indicating their choices, following which there is a procedure for an individual's ultimate association with one organization.

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

**Quota** - The number of potential new members going through membership recruitment divided by the number of women's fraternities on the campus.

**Recruitment** - A program (and period of time) of membership recruitment by Fraternal organizations. Recruitment (formerly called Rush) is the time when fraternities and sororities recruit new members. For NPHC groups, they recruit, called "intake" when each chapter decides (each NPHC group will conduct recruitment separately).

**Risk Manager** - Chapter officer who is responsible for the management of the chapter's risk. Position responsibilities include the adherence to the Student Code of Conduct and the Fraternity and Sorority Life Policies and Procedures.

**Risk Management** - Involves analyzing all exposures to the possibility of loss and determining how to handle these exposures: reduce or transfer the risk.

**Ritual** – A ceremony or collection of practices used by fraternity and sorority chapters to reaffirm organizational values and founding principles. These proceedings can be secretive or open to the public.

**Sands** - Term used to refer to members of other organizations or chapters that were initiated during the same semester.

**Sister** (alt., Soror) - An initiated member of a sorority.

**Sorority** - An individual women's Fraternal organization traditionally denoted by Greek letters. This is the term commonly used to distinguish between men's (fraternities) and women's (sororities) organizations. As noted previously, some sororities are identified as a fraternity in their official name.

**Stepping** - A modern form of African dance that incorporates marching, dancing, chanting, singing as well as call and response.

**Step Show** – Stepping exhibition and/or competition.

**Yard** - A term used by NPHC groups to indicate the campus. Used in phrases such as which groups are on the yard, meaning which groups are on the campus.