

# Fraternity & Sorority Life Frequently Asked Questions

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## **What does fraternity & sorority Life have to offer?**

The fraternity and sorority community at American University is comprised of different Greek letter organizations. Many students find that joining a fraternity or sorority provides them a home away from home and a foundation upon which to build a new and exciting future. In addition, fraternal organizations provide a place for our students to learn how to be strong leaders, athletes, and aid in academic pursuits while providing opportunities for service, and interpersonal development. The decision to join a Greek letter organization is a lifelong commitment with an organization that stands for the best things college has to offer.

## **Will fraternity & sorority life assist students as they begin their careers?**

One of the tremendous assets of affiliation with a Greek letter organization is the network of alumni/ae members. As a student prepares for entry into the career world, alumni/ae can assist in job placement through their knowledge of where jobs are and who is hiring. In addition, Greek Life assists students in developing transferable skills that are needed such as management, leadership development, and communications.

## **Does it cost a lot to be Greek?**

Joining a fraternity or a sorority does have a financial commitment. The chapters are self-supporting through dues paid by their members. When students join a Greek letter organization, they also agree to pay dues and fees while in school to maintain membership. Although chapters may make accommodations for special needs, students should discuss the financial obligations with their parents before deciding to join.

## **What is the time commitment involved in belonging to a Greek-letter organization?**

There is no minimum or maximum time that a student must donate to the fraternity or sorority. Through involvement with the chapter, students will learn to better manage their time by balancing academics, work, and other commitments. Students find that being active in a fraternity or sorority is well worth the time they put into it.

## **Are fraternities and sororities really like the actors in *Animal House*?**

The American University fraternity & sorority community promotes responsibility in our members. The Greek governing councils encourage responsibility in a number of ways. Through judicial boards, chapters, and governing councils, we hold accountable those members of the Greek community who do not behave appropriately and have many opportunities for enhanced education regarding our principles and values.

## **What about hazing?**

Fraternities and sororities were founded on strong moral, social, and academic principles. Hazing, or any activity which subjects members to harassment, intimidation, physical exhaustion, or mental distress is entirely contrary to those founding principles. Each of the chapters represented at American as well as University policy forbid hazing in all student activities. As such, allegations of such offenses are investigated, adjudicated, and sanctioned promptly.

## **What does being Greek really mean?**

Membership in a Greek letter organization is a lifetime commitment. Each of the chapters develops a special bond often called brotherhood or sisterhood. This bond is nurtured through common work, laughter, service, athletics, and through the shared successes and frustrations of all. Choosing

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the Greek community means working with a group of men or women who can exchange and stand for common goals and ideas while being held to a higher standard than other college students. The Greek experience during the college years is a gateway to many rewards and connections later in life.

### **How your will your student join a fraternity or sorority?**

At American University we have deferred requirement. This means that your student can join a Greek letter organization once they have completed 12 semester hours and have a 2.5 GPA. First year students will participate in spring recruitment. The Interfraternity Council organizations have a semi formal recruitment period that lasts three weeks at the start of each semester. The Panhellenic organizations have a formal process that takes place each spring semester that lasts five days and allows mutual selection for potential new members and the chapters. Chapters that are eligible may take a new member class in the fall semester, but this is not guaranteed. The National PanHellenic Council organizations hold intake and information sessions throughout the semester to allow for new members to learn about their organizations.

If your student is thinking about joining one of these organizations encourage them to look at all of the options on campus as this is a lifelong commitment. Recruitment introduces prospective members to the Fraternity and Sorority community and gives unaffiliated students the chance to learn what makes fraternities and sororities unique organizations. Students who wish to participate in the recruitment process are not required to join any organization. Feel free to contact the national organization headquarters with any specific questions in regard to the chapter or the University.

### **What is an unrecognized organization?**

An unrecognized organization at American University means that that organization does not meet the minimum standards to be recognized by the University. This is particularly important in the fraternity and sorority community as we have an unrecognized fraternity (Epsilon Iota or EI) that not recognized by either the University or the national organization.

Involvement in an unrecognized organization could pose risks to students, and the university highly discourages individuals from joining them. Please talk with your students about joining only recognized organizations if they choose to pursue fraternity and sorority life.