

## *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 three 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*.

### **A. Membership Requirements for Greek Organizations**

#### **1. Requirements to Participate in Recruitment:**

- a) All first-year students are welcome to participate in Formal Recruitment activities of Panhellenic and IFC.
- b) Returning or transfer students must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher for Panhellenic Recruitment, while freshmen must have a 2.8 or higher. For IFC Recruitment, freshmen, returning and transfer students must have a 2.7 or higher. For NPHC Intake, the GPA requirement will depend on the organization you are interested in joining.
- c) Mercer's NPHC organizations hold membership intake throughout the year (typically in the Spring) for students who have accumulated a minimum number of hours (usually 12 or more). First-semester, first-year students are not allowed to join these organizations.
- d) Must be a Mercer, Macon Campus student. Mercer does not allow for students from other institutions to join Greek Organization. Students from the other branches may look into joining the chapters at that branch, but not on the Macon campus.

#### **2. Requirements to be Initiated:**

- a) Prospective initiates who are returning or transfer students must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 during the most recent academic term.
- b) 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 or NPHC; whichever is higher.
- c) 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.
- d) Greek organizations earning a term grade point average during the most recent grading period which is below the Non-Greek Men's 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.
- e) All fraternities and sororities must register all pre-initiation and initiation activities with the Office of Campus Life three business days prior to the first activity. No initiation activities may be conducted during Dead Week or the final examination period.

### **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 Panhellenic/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. This Policy also outlines corrective actions should a chapter's GPA fall below a 2.5 for any amount of time.

#### ***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):

- a) Membership rosters must be filed within 14 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. 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) 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. risk management policies
  - g. liability insurance policies and certificate of coverage
  - h. chapter calendar for the current semester
  - i. awards information
  - j. anything else as deemed necessary by Office of Greek Life, Office of Housing and Residence Life, Student Affairs or Campus Life

[NB: Exemptions may be granted if accompanied by a letter from the organizations inter/national headquarters and approved by the Assistant Director of Campus Life for Greek Life & Education].

- e) All Greek organizations must maintain a house on campus with a current and active lease agreement, unless an exemption has been made with the Office of Greek Life and the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

#### ***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 monthly update report to the Greek Advisor.
- e) Attend the President's Roundtable monthly.

##### **2. Chapter Presidents:**

Students who are elected President of their respective chapters must demonstrate the following:

- a) Meet with the Greek Advisor on a monthly basis.
- b) Complete and submit a monthly update report to the Greek Advisor.
- c) Attend the President's Roundtable monthly.

### ***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. 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.

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 University rules, 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 Student 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 Greek Advisor.

*Request*

1. Expansion/extension can be brought about in three ways:
  - a. A student interest group can approach the Assistant Director of Greek Life and the local governing councils for recognition
  - b. A national organization can contact the Assistant Director of Greek Life to express their interest in the university
  - c. The governing councils at Mercer may petition to the Assistant Director of Greek 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 Assistant Director of Greek Life, the Director, 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 Greek 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
    - 7) Constitution/By Laws
    - 8) List of interested students
    - 9) List of who would be the Alumni Advisor and Faculty/Staff Advisor
    - 10) Alumni support in the area
    - 11) Timeline for expansion
    - 12) Letter of support for the Mercer Greek Community, values and procedures
    - 13) Letter of support for the local governing council
    - 14) Philanthropy Information
    - 15) Programs and efforts typical of the organization
    - 16) If the organization had been on Mercer's campus in the past, proof must be established that the organizations is in good standing with the university regarding judicial and financial matters

*Greek Village*

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.

**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 Assistant Director of Greek 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 Assistant Director of Greek 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.

**Exemptions to the Housing Requirement:**

1. Chapters may request a one year exemption from the Greek Housing policy if the chapter size consists of 10 or fewer members. This request must be submitted in writing to the Office of Greek Life and Housing and Residence Life by the end of the semester prior to the year the extension 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 Greek 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.
4. For more information regarding the Greek Housing Exemption due to having fewer than 10 members, please see contact the Office of Greek Life or the Office of Housing and Residence Life.

\*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.\*