



Fraternity & Sorority Handbook

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Background

In Spring of 2006, with a charge from the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, the Task Force on Greek Life at UC Merced thoroughly reviewed data related to fraternity/sorority membership among college students. In addition to examining the roots of fraternal organizations and what trends currently exist among members related to academic performance, drinking habits and community service, the Task Force determined student interest in joining Greek-letter organizations at UC Merced.

As a result of their research, the Task Force made the recommendation that the University move forward with the development of a fraternity and sorority community, with consideration of the following parameters:

- Strongly reaffirm the core focus of the learning culture at UC Merced and the mission to create a campus community of scholars.
- Clarify guidelines and expectations for fraternities and sororities, which include responsibility for the behavior of individual members and are reflected in an annual review process.
- Create policies that address substance use and abuse and mandate the attendance to and development of chapter-sponsored educational programs.
- Establish and implement an annual certification process for individual chapters, which will serve as a condition of continued chapter operation.
- Allocate University resources to promote leadership development and to encourage fraternity/sorority organizations to adhere to both their core values and the collective values embraced by the Fraternity & Sorority Council.
- Establish guidelines to review potential fraternity/sorority organizations and limit colonization to inter/national organizations that meet University expectations.

Upon approval of the Task Force's recommendations, Fraternity & Sorority Life was developed as a unit of the ***Office of Student Life*** (OSL). OSL exists to support the development of our students and community to promote responsible and engaged citizenship.

The mission of ***Fraternity & Sorority Life*** (FSL) is to enhance the collegiate experience through leadership, scholarship, service and social development. Fraternity & Sorority Life will also serve to educate on the positive nature and goals of Greek Life, while building unity through the creation of strong and lasting relationships. These standards shall promote personal and civic responsibilities as well as give back to the university and surrounding community.

The Fraternity & Sorority Handbook is designed to assist student leaders and fraternity/sorority advisors in becoming acquainted with policies and procedures that apply to fraternity/sorority organizations. The handbook also aims to provide resources on campus and online for the promotion of positive development and success.

The Office of Student Life shall review this document on an annual basis and initiate revisions to meet university needs and/or professional standards for Fraternity & Sorority Life.

Relationship of the University and Fraternity/Sorority Organizations

I. Definition of Fraternity/Sorority Organization

- A. A “fraternity/sorority organization” is defined as an inter/nationally affiliated organization, which attains official University recognition through the University expansion process and annually registers and meets the requirements of a Registered Campus Organization.
- B. Each fraternity/sorority organization must be a member of and in good standing with one of the following umbrella organizations:
 - i. National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, Inc. (NALFO)
 - ii. National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)
 - iii. National Panhellenic Conference (NPC)
 - iv. North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC)
- C. Exceptions to Section I, B may be granted for multicultural or special interest fraternity/sorority organizations that are not affiliated with an umbrella organization, but are part of a local, national or international organization with appropriate insurance coverage and support.

II. Relationship of the University and Fraternity/Sorority Organizations

- A. UC Merced seeks to officially recognize and assist fraternity/sorority organizations whose purposes and practices are and remain consistent with those of the university and its Principles of Community. (See Appendix A for UC Merced’s Principles of Community.)
- B. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will confer official university recognition. The Office of Student Life will serve as the sponsoring university unit for all recognized fraternity/sorority organizations at UC Merced.
- C. The University delegates power to the Office of Student Life, specifically the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor, to develop a set of operating principles and guidelines for the fraternity and sorority community.
- D. The Fraternity/Sorority Advisor will advise the on-campus umbrella group for fraternities and sororities, called the Fraternity & Sorority Council, and the honor society, Order of Omega.
- E. The Fraternity & Sorority Council (FSC) includes an Executive Board and a delegate from each organization and will serve as the unifying structure for the fraternity and sorority community. The University requires that all recognized colonies and chapters be members of the FSC.
- F. Fraternity/Sorority organizations must register for and maintain on-campus recognition as a Registered Campus Organization annually through the Office of Student Life.
- G. Fraternity/Sorority organizations will inform and work in collaboration with the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor when considering housing or long-term meeting facilities to ensure inter/national and university requirements and standards are met.
- H. Fraternity/sorority organizations will provide information on officers, members, advisors, anti-hazing statements, academic release statements, inter/national constitution and bylaws, local bylaws, articles of incorporation, insurance coverage, financial costs and other required reports to the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor when requested.

- I. The Fraternity/Sorority Advisor will provide support through program development in all areas related to the growth and enhancement of any fraternity/sorority organization.
- J. The Fraternity/Sorority Advisor will notify the inter/national organization of any disciplinary action imposed on a colony or chapter recognized by the university. Inter/national organizations will notify the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor of any disciplinary action imposed upon colonies or chapters. Every effort shall be made by the University and the inter/national organization to coordinate disciplinary actions.

Requirements for Fraternity/Sorority Organizations

In order to ensure values congruence between the actions of the fraternity/sorority organization, the standards of the inter/national organizations and the University's Principles of Community, a series of policies have been created for UC Merced's recognized fraternities and sororities.

The following are requirements for a fraternity/sorority organization to maintain recognition at UC Merced. Failure to uphold the requirements of this section, or any of the stated expectations in this handbook, will result in an Office of Student Life administrative review of the colony/chapter's University recognition status.

I. General Operations

- A. Fraternity/sorority organizations must act in accordance with their inter/national policies and procedures, as well as all University policies.
- B. Fraternity/sorority organizations are required to maintain recognition as a Registered Campus Organization, which includes paying a \$25 fee to UC Regents.
- C. Colony and chapter officers, specifically the President and Treasurer, are expected to complete RCO Training at the beginning of their elected term and maintain an up-to-date profile on CatLife.
- D. Fraternity/sorority organizations are required to be members in good standing with the Fraternity & Sorority Council, appropriate inter/national organizations and applicable umbrella organizations.
- E. Each fraternity/sorority organization must have a chapter advisor and a faculty/staff advisor.
- F. Fraternity/sorority organizations must file the appropriate recognition paperwork and reports with the Office of Student Life annually and as necessary. Documents include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Membership roster
 - ii. Officer roster
 - iii. Advisory Board roster
 - iv. Completed Grade Release Forms for all members
 - v. Proof of Insurance for \$1,000,000 liability coverage, with "The Regents of the University of California" named as additionally insured.
 - vi. Organization Constitution and Bylaws
 - vii. New/Prospective Member Education program, expectations and timeline
 - viii. The Greek Initiative
 - ix. Miscellaneous documents, as requested by the Office of Student Life

II. Membership Recruitment Eligibility and Expectations

- A. Recruitment will occur just once a year, through the formal recruitment process each Spring.
 - i. Fraternity/Sorority organizations may receive an exception to conduct informal recruitment in the Fall. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs grants exceptions.
 - ii. Interest in informal recruitment must be submitted by chapters in the Spring in the form of the Application to Appeal for Informal/Fall Recruitment.
- B. Potential New Members must have earned a minimum 12 units as a full-time student in a college/university after high school graduation, be currently enrolled in a minimum of

12 units and earned a minimum 2.5 GPA in college/university to be eligible for membership in a colony or chapter.

- C. The New Member education process must be completed within 8 weeks of bid distribution.
 - i. All New Members must attend the Being A New Greek Summit, which occurs following bid/invitation distribution.
- D. Each fraternity/sorority organization must maintain a collegiate membership of 10 or more members.
- E. No fraternity/sorority organization shall sponsor an auxiliary organization or activity, which indicates membership of any kind in their group (e.g., "little sisters," "big brothers," etc.). Only full membership as an active member, new member or alumnus/a member shall be offered.

III. Academic and Conduct Standards

- A. Fraternity/sorority colonies and chapters are required to maintain a minimum group grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 per semester.
- B. Fraternity & Sorority Council officers must maintain the minimum GPA as defined in the FSC Constitution and Bylaws.
- C. Fraternity/Sorority organizations will not program during the last week of instruction each semester to respect the academic priorities of members and the campus community as a whole.

IV. Campus and Community Involvement

- A. All chapter events (on and off campus) must be registered with the Office of Student Life at least three weeks prior to the event date using the Event Registration Form on CatLife.
- B. Events that involve food for sale or food to be served to the general public require a Food Permit. Members of fraternity/sorority organizations who will prepare and/or serve food must complete food training and submit a request for a food permit to receive Food Permit.
- C. All fundraising activities must comply with policies and procedures outlined by the Office of Student Life, including completion of Requests for Fundraising, Income Reports and verification of donation.
- D. Each fraternity/sorority organization must participate in at least one community service event per semester.
- E. Fraternity/Sorority organizations are expected to participate in events and programs sponsored by Fraternity & Sorority Life and Fraternity & Sorority Council.
 - i. Attendance by Chapter Presidents and Delegates (or designees) is required at the annual Fraternity & Sorority Leadership Retreat.
- F. Each fraternity/sorority organization is encouraged to co-sponsor with and attend the events of other Registered Campus Organizations that are not members of the fraternity and sorority community.

Risk Management Policies

Fraternity/sorority organizations at UC Merced will adhere to all policies set forth by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Office of Student Life, Fraternity & Sorority Council and others established by the University and UC Office of the President. Examples of such policies are outlined below.

Individuals who violate the following rules, policies and procedures may void protection for themselves under their organization's insurance program. An individual's actions may jeopardize other members, other entities and others named as insured by the inter/national organization's liability and risk management policies. Individuals involved become personally liable and will retain their own attorneys for defense.

Violations of any policies may result in the loss of a fraternity/sorority organization's university recognition.

I. Hazing

- A. Fraternity/Sorority colonies and chapters will understand and abide by all the California Codes, Educational Code Section 48900 and Penal Code Section 245.6, as well as all inter/national organization and University policies related to hazing.

II. Alcohol and Drugs

- A. Fraternity/Sorority colonies and chapters will understand and abide by all inter/national policies, applicable umbrella organization policies and all University policies and procedures regarding the use of alcohol and drugs during fraternity/sorority functions.
- B. No fraternity/sorority colonies or chapters will use or serve alcohol or drugs at any recruitment activity or event.
- C. Fraternity/Sorority colonies and chapters will not distribute promotional clothing, specialty items or other consumer items, which utilize a university trademark, symbol or logo in combination with an alcoholic beverage or drug trademark, symbol or logo, regardless of whether such promotional items are free or for sale.
- D. Fraternity/Sorority colonies and chapters will not produce advertisements where alcohol or drugs are mentioned.
- E. The production, possession, distribution, sale and/or use of any illegal drugs or controlled substances at any fraternity/sorority event, activity or meeting are prohibited. Fraternity/Sorority colonies and chapters are responsible for knowledge and observance of state and federal laws, University regulations and inter/national organization policies regarding drug and substance abuse.

III. Physical Abuse/Assault and Sexual Harassment

- A. Conduct unbecoming of a fraternity/sorority organization or its individual members as set forth by inter/national philosophies and guidelines or University policies and Principles of Community will not be condoned or tolerated.
- B. Fraternity/Sorority colonies and chapters will not tolerate or condone any form of sexist or sexually abusive behaviors on the part of its members, whether physical, mental or emotional. This includes any actions, activities or events that are demeaning

to men or women, including but not limited to verbal harassment and sexual assault by individuals or members acting together.

IV. Insurance Coverage

- A. Each fraternity/sorority organization is required to understand and abide by their inter/national insurance coverage. Proof of coverage is required to be submitted to the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor annually, or as it expires. The University requires a minimum \$1,000,000 liability.

V. Pertinent University Policies

- A. University of California, Policies Related to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students 101.00 Student Conduct
- B. University of California, Policies Related to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students 102.00 Grounds for Discipline, including but not limited to:
 - i. 102.06 Unauthorized Entry, Use or Possession
 - ii. 102.08 Assault, Threats of Violence, or Conduct Threatening Health or Safety
 - iii. 102.09 Harassment (Interim)
 - iv. 102.12 Hazing
 - v. 102.17 Possession, Use or Distribution of Controlled Substances
 - vi. 102.18 Possession, Use or Distribution of Alcohol in Violation of Policy

University Administrative Review

Failure to uphold the requirements and expectations in this handbook may result in a review by the Office of Student Life of a colony or chapter's University recognition status.

I. Reporting an Incident

- A. Complaining parties are encouraged to personally contact the President of the fraternity/sorority organization to seek resolution. The Fraternity/Sorority Advisor can provide names and contact information for organization Presidents. If the complaint is of serious nature (potential violation of University policies, state or federal law), the complaining party should go directly to the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor.
- B. If the fraternity/sorority organization fails to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complaining party, if the issue is serious or of a recurring nature or if the issue involves several fraternity/sorority organizations, a written complaint should be referred to the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor.

II. Incident Report Review

- A. Procedures are initiated when the Office of Student Life receives a written report giving details of the alleged incident. The Fraternity/Sorority Advisor will review the report and determine the appropriate course(s) of action in consultation with the Director of Student Life and Judicial Affairs. Possible responses include:
 - i. Dismissal of the complaint for lack of evidence
 - ii. Mediation
 - 1. Mediation will be recommended in a situation where it is believed that facilitated direct communication between two or more parties (not including the University) may be sufficient to resolve the complaint.
 - 2. The Fraternity/Sorority Advisor or Director of Student Life and Judicial Affairs will serve as mediator and coordinate the logistics of the mediation, including: party notification, scheduling, coordinating the mediation itself and providing a follow-up report for each colony/chapter and the Office of Student Life.
 - 3. Mediation will not be recommended when a complaint concerns only one colony/chapter or in situations that are serious enough in nature to bypass the mediation process.
 - iii. Inquiry and Informal Resolution
 - 1. Inquiry and informal resolution will be recommended in a situation involving a single colony/chapter where it is believed that a formal meeting between the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor and the chapter leadership will resolve the situation or concern through mutual discovery and agreement.
 - 2. Prior to the meeting, the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor will conduct an inquiry by contacting and gathering information from individual(s) named in the initial report submitted to the Office of Student Life.
 - 3. Following the meeting, the Office of Student Life will issue a resolution summary letter outlining the inquiry findings and expectations and/or sanctions the colony/chapter must meet to resolve the matter at this level.

4. If the colony/chapter disagrees with the findings or fails to meeting the documented sanction(s) or expectation(s), the matter will be referred as an appeal to the Director of Student Life and Judicial Affairs for review.

iv. Student Judicial Affairs (SJA)

1. Complaints will be referred to SJA when cases are especially egregious. SJA in the Office of Student Life oversees the student disciplinary system for reports of suspected misconduct, both academic and nonacademic.
2. For more detail regarding this process, please refer to UC Merced's Student Handbook, Chapter VII: Administration of Student Discipline.

III. Sanctions

A. Disciplinary sanctions and administrative actions may be imposed separately or in combination. Potential sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- i. Censure or Warning
- ii. Exclusion from Areas of the Campus or Official University Functions
- iii. Disciplinary Probation
- iv. Loss of Privileges and Exclusion from Activities
- v. Restitution
- vi. Special Assignment
- vii. Loss of University Recognition

Expansion Process

The University of California, Merced chooses to intentionally and carefully manage the growth and expansion of fraternity/sorority organizations. UC Merced seeks to host organizations that will partner to create a 21st century fraternity and sorority community, as demonstrated by ideals consistent with those of the University and a willingness to commit the human and financial resources necessary to assure achievement of those ideals.

UC Merced is committed to the growth and development of values-based fraternities and sororities on campus. This decision to allow expansion or not is informed by a duty to balance the viability of our current Greek chapters and support the developing interest by students to associate with a new group, as well as the campus' responsibility to monitor chapter expansion with grass roots efforts by students to form new Greek organizations.

During each spring semester, a University Committee on Greek Expansion will be charged by, and report to, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on potential expansion for the upcoming academic year. The Expansion Committee is comprised of the Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students (chair), the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management or designee, the coordinator of Fraternity & Sorority Life, the Director of Alumni Relations, and the Vice-President for Fraternities, and the Vice-President for Sororities from the Fraternity & Sorority Council. This Committee serves to ensure that future fraternities and sororities are successful contributors to the mission of the University of California, Merced, the fraternity and sorority community, and their respective organizations.

The tenets below provide a brief overview of the expansion process.

- I. UC Merced will only grant recognition to inter/national fraternities and sororities. Exceptions may be granted with appropriate insurance coverage and support.
- II. Interested students and/or inter/national organizations who intend to start a fraternity/sorority organization must demonstrate a mutual interest and have at least 10 interested undergraduate members meeting all academic and credit criteria in order to move forward in the expansion process.
- III. All students wishing to be recognized at UC Merced must follow the procedure outlined in the Expansion Process for Fraternity/Sorority Organizations.
- IV. It is the responsibility of the Fraternity-Sorority Council in cooperation with the Fraternity/Sorority Advisor in the Office of Student Life to administer the expansion process and make recommendations regarding recognition.
- V. It is the responsibility of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to extend invitations for recognition.

Appendix A: UC Merced Principles of Community

The University of California, Merced is a public, land-grant institution created to serve the communities of the San Joaquin Valley, the State of California, the nation, and the world through excellence in education, research, and public service.

These principles reflect our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures lifelong learning and growth for all of its members. Every member of the UC Merced community has a personal responsibility to acknowledge, practice and join us in our collective pursuit of the principles listed below:

We Recognize and Celebrate the identities, values, and beliefs of our community.

We Affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person while cultivating a campus climate rooted in mutual respect and compassion.

We Uphold the right to freedom of expression and encourage a culture of dialogue, understanding, and civility in all interactions. We seek to create a campus where a rich tapestry of ideas is shared, collaboration is embraced, and innovation is promoted.

We Pursue excellence in teaching and learning through contributions from all community members fostering a culture of open exchange.

We Promote opportunities for active participation and leadership in our communities.

We Champion civic engagement, environmental stewardship, research, and teaching that connects theory and practice to learning and doing.

We Take Pride in building, sustaining, and sharing a culture that is founded on these principles of unity and respect.

The UC Merced Principles of Community were developed by the Chancellor's Advisory Council for Campus Climate, Culture and Inclusion in collaboration with the campus community. These principles were issued on March 25, 2014.