

## Greek Life Glossary

**Active** - See *Collegian*

**Advisor** - An alumnus or alumna member who serves as a resource for the active chapter and liaison between the alums and collegians.

**Advisory Board** - Members of an alumni chapter that advises the chapter.

**Affiliate** - To join with an organization. Colonies petition national organizations to affiliate with them. A member who switches schools may also affiliate with the chapter at his/her new school.

**Alumni** - Members of a fraternity who have graduated. (Singular is alumnus)

**Alumnae** - Members of a sorority who have graduated. (Singular is alumna)

**Alum** – abbreviation for Alumnus, Alumna, Alumni, or Alumnae

**Badge** - Also known as a pin, it is an item of jewelry given to members upon initiation. The badge is to be worn at all official functions, and upon a members death it should be returned to the sorority or fraternity headquarters. The badge must be worn with business like attire, usually over the heart and above all other pins.

**Bid** - An invitation to join an IFC fraternity or NPC sorority. They are given out during formal recruitment (on Bid Day for sororities, at anytime before the end of formal recruitment for fraternities). The NPHC and UGSFC process does not include bids.

**Bid Day** - The last day of recruitment in which potential new members receive formal invitations to join a sorority.

**Big** - Nickname for big brother or sister, a mentor assigned to a new member. Many organizations have special names for these pairings.

**Brother** - Term that fraternity members call each other.

**Call/Chant** - A yell used mostly by NPHC organizations (although some NIC, NPC, NALFO, NMGC, and local orgs have calls as well). Used to identify and greet brothers and sisters.

**Chapter** - A branch of a national sorority, established at a campus. Each will have their own name, usually designated by Greek Letters.

**Chapter House** - A house on campus where members of the organization reside. Not all campuses have chapter houses. Some have designated rooms given to each fraternity or sorority called Chapter Rooms, or a special residence hall where each group gets a floor. *Montclair State University does not designate housing for Greeks.*

**Chapter Meeting** - A meeting held to discuss fraternity or sorority business.

**Charter** - Permission from the national organization to have a chapter.

**Collegian/Collegiate** - An initiated member of a fraternity or sorority currently in college. Formerly known as active.

**Colony** - A new organization that is awaiting official recognition from their national to have a chapter at a campus.

**Colors** - The official pair or triad of colors that represent a specific Greek organization.

**Continuous Open Bidding** - Also known as COB. If a sorority does not reach the allowable membership total during formal recruitment or if they do not get quota, they may hold an informal recruitment, and offer bids to potential new members.

**Crest** - Insignia used by fraternity or sorority members. Most Greek organizations reserve the crest for initiated members only. Each crest has hidden, secret meanings behind it. Also known as a coat of arms or shield.

**Cut** - When a sorority does not invite a woman back to participate in new member activities, or the potential new member does not go back to a house she was invited to.

**Depledge/Drop** - The process where a new member elects, or is asked, to relinquish membership during their pledge/initiation period. Those who depledge a NPC sorority may not pledge another sorority for one full calendar year.

**Deferred Recruitment** - Recruitment which starts after the beginning of the school year.

**Dirty Rushing** - When one organization will attempt to influence a potential new member through gifts, bad mouthing other organizations, etc.

**Dry** - A fraternity or sorority which does not permit alcohol on their house premises, and in some cases, does not allow the organization to host a party involving alcohol. Some fraternities are going dry at the national level, and all sororities have different levels of "dry". For example, one may allow the sorority to attend a function hosted by a non-dry fraternity, while another sorority may not.

**Dry Rush** - A fraternity rush event with no alcohol. All sorority recruitment events are dry, so this term only applies to fraternities.

**Dues** - Charge of joining a fraternity or sorority. Covers costs of national and local operations, formal events, activities and other events. The amount varies based on the organization.

**Expansion** - When an organization is looking to expand and open a chapter at a new school.

**Formal Recruitment** - See *Recruitment*.

**Founders Day** - An event celebrated by fraternities and sororities to highlight the founding of their organization and celebrate its history. It's not necessarily held on the day the organization was founded.

**Frat** - A nickname for a fraternity or a fraternity brother. IFC members generally find this to be offensive; however NPHC fraternities use it as a mark of respect for each other.

**Fraternity** - A group of people brought together because of mutual interests. Generally thought of as a group of men, but also refers to co-ed organizations and many sororities are officially fraternities.

**Greek** - Not the nationality. Greek in this sense means a member of a fraternity or sorority.

**Greek Week** - An organized week of activities to unite all councils in friendly competition.

**Handshake** - It's a special handshake unique to each organization. Only initiated members will know the handshake. Also known as a Grip.

**Hazing** - Any act performed by a member of any organization that is likely to cause harm, danger, causes public embarrassment or shame, compromise's a persons dignity, causes the person to be the object of ridicule, cause psychological harm, or is illegal. Hazing is against the law in all states, and is against the principles of all fraternities and sororities.

**Hold Over** - Someone who is a new member who for some reason, can't be initiated with their new member class and is "held over" until the next initiation occurs. Often happens because of finances, personal reasons, grades, etc.

**Hot Boxing** – Members of Greek organizations putting pressure on potential members to join.

**House** - A physical facility, usually used to hold meetings and other events. *Montclair State University does not have houses for fraternities and sororities.* Also a synonym for an organization or the word chapter.

**House Corporation** - The entity that holds the title to property that a chapter lives or meets in. This is usually an alumni group like an advisory board.

**House Director/House Mom/House Manager** - A person hired to live in the chapter house and supervise the chapter members.

**IFC** - Stands for Interfraternity Council, and is the governing body of the NIC fraternities, on some campuses local fraternities are housed under the IFC.

**Inactive Member** - A member who has elected to become inactive in fraternity or sorority life for various reasons. They have no say or participation in chapter/organization activities.

**Independent/GDI** - Term for a student that is not a member of a Greek organization.

**In House** - A member that lives in the house (if an organization has one that is!)

**In House Legacy** - A potential new member who has a sibling who is currently a collegian in the organization. For instance, if you are going through recruitment, and your blood sister is an active member at that school, you are an in house legacy to that organization. If your sister has already graduated and left the school, you are considered to be a regular legacy.

**Initiate** - A person who has recently learned the ritual of a fraternity or sorority and is a full member.

**Initiation** - A ceremony where a pledge/prospective new member becomes a full member of the organization. Initiation ceremonies are private and different for all organizations.

**Intake** - Term for the process by which NPHC members are selected to become new members of an organization. Much more secretive than recruitment or rush, but generally includes an application and an interview process, followed by an educational program done at the local level conducted by both undergraduates and alumni, then an initiation (generally known as "crossing").

**Intentional Single/Double Preference (ISP or IDP)** - When a prospective member only puts down one/two choice(s) on her preference card. This sometimes lessens the chances of her getting a bid, and isn't recommended. Formerly called suiciding, but was changed to ISP/IDP because of the negative implications of the term.

**Interest Group** - A group of individuals on campus in the first stage of the process leading to installation as a chapter of a Greek-letter organization.

**Lavaliere** - A necklace with the sorority letters, often worn by members. Lavaliering is a process where a fraternity member would give his lavaliere to his girlfriend, as a sign of a serious relationship. Depending on the campus, this can be equal to "pinning".

**Legacy** - The son, daughter, brother, or sister of an organization's member. Some organizations also include grandchildren or step children. Sorority rules sometimes dictate she cannot be cut from the first round of parties, but in no way are legacies guaranteed a bid from the organization they are a legacy to.

**Letters** - The first Greek letter of each Greek word that makes up the name of the fraternity or sorority are often displayed on clothing. Some organizations don't allow new members to wear letters (only the name spelled out), while others do.

**Little/Lil** - Nickname for a Big's new member that they mentor.

**Line** - An NPHC term somewhat equal to a pledge class. They are the potential new members of the organization. Lines are often given names.

**Live In** - Used to identify members that live inside the chapter house.

**Mascot** - A symbol, usually an animal, chosen to represent a Greek letter organization. Many organizations have symbols and mascots, such as Zeta Phi Beta often uses a cat as their mascot.

**Mismatch** - When a potential new member's name fails to match any of her sorority preferences.

**Mixer/Exchange/Social** - A party between a fraternity and sorority, or several fraternities and sororities, often involving themes or games.

**NALFO** – the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, the umbrella council for Latino Greek Letter organizations.

**National** - A fraternity or sorority's national headquarters. Usually erroneously called "national", as most organizations are international, having chapters outside of the US.

**Neophyte** - New member of Greek Letter organization; also called a Neo. This term is generally used by NPHC, NALFO, and NMGC organizations.

**New Member** - After receiving and accepting a Bid, the person becomes a new member. Formerly called a pledge (and still called a pledge in NIC fraternities). Sometimes called Associate Member.

**New Member Pin** - A distinctive badge worn on the chest designating a new member of a particular fraternity or sorority for the period of time between bid acceptance and initiation. Most organizations require the new member to return the new member pin at initiation in exchange for their member pin.

**New Member Class** - The group of new members that will be going through the New Member Program and Initiation together. Formerly called a pledge class, this term is still used among the fraternities.

**New Member Educator** - The liaison between the new members and the chapter, they are responsible for implementing and monitoring the new member program and preparing the new members for initiation.

**New Member Program** - The time period where the new member learns about their new fraternity or sorority before initiation. Lasts from Bid day until Initiation. Formerly called pledge period (and still called this in fraternities).

**NIC** - Stands for North American Interfraternity Conference, and is the national coordinating body of all the men's fraternities. It does not enforce policies on the local IFC's, and is totally different from the purpose of NPC and NPHC.

**NMGC** – the National Multicultural Greek Council, the umbrella council for Multicultural Greek Organizations

**No Frills** - Formal recruitment where costumes, elaborate food, skits, etc are forbidden at all or most rounds. Designed to let sororities recruit on a level playing field, so a sorority with more funding can not out decorate a sorority with a smaller budget. Also used to prevent over-spending on recruitment, which is usually a large portion of a sorority budget.

**NPC** - The National Panhellenic Conference is the organization that governs the 26 national women's sororities.

**NPHC** - The National Pan-Hellenic Council, the governing body of the 9 historically African American fraternities and sororities, also known as the Divine Nine. Also the local governing council for the NPHC organizations.

**On the Yard** – an NPHC phrase meaning that a chapter is currently chartered on campus

**Open Motto** - A short phrase that describes the purpose or outlook of a fraternity or sorority, and is available for all to read. Many organizations also have a Creed or Purpose in addition to an Open Motto, as well as a motto that is only for initiated members.

**Order of Omega** - An honor society for Greek members who demonstrate outstanding leadership and academic achievement.

**Paraphernalia** – also known as para. This is clothing and accessories which display the organizations letters.

**Panhellenic Council/PC** - The governing body of the sororities of a particular campus.

**Paper Members** – Generally refers to NPHC members who join without going through a new member education process.

**Perp** - Someone who pretends to be a member of a fraternity or sorority, by wearing the letters, claiming they're a collegian etc. They will, and always do, get found out.

**Philanthropy** - A charity or fundraiser that the fraternity or sorority supports. Can be national, local, or both.

**Pinning** - Term for a fraternity member giving his pin or a sweetheart pin to his girlfriend. Often a precursor to an engagement.

**Pledge** - See *New Member*

**Potential New Member** - A person who is interested in joining a Greek letter organization, and will participate in rush, intake, or recruitment. Formerly called rushees by sororities, term is still used by fraternities. Also abbreviated to PNM.

**Preference** - The final socials held by sororities during Recruitment. They are fancier than the previous socials and usually include a ritual that potential new members can participate in. Also known as Pref, or Final Dinners

**Preference Cards** - Potential new members sign this after the preference socials, indicating in order, which sororities of the ones whose parties they attended they liked the most. These cards, along with the sororities lists of members they would like, are used to match the PNM's and sororities with one another in a mutually selective process.

**Probate/Coming Out Show** – A performance by newly inducted or soon to be inducted members. A way for organizations to showcase the newest members of the organization. These shows are generally done by NPHC, NALFO, and NMGC organizations

**Prophyte** – A term used to describe an older member of an NPHC, NALFO, or NMGC organization that has inducted new members.

**Quota** - A set number of new members a sorority can extend bids to. Quota is determined by taking the total number of potential new members at Pref (sometimes from the second round of invitational parties, depending on the school), and dividing by the number of sororities. For example, if there are 5 sororities on campus, and 100 girls on pref night, each sorority can take a maximum of 20 new members.

**Quota Additions** – Women who are matched to their preference for sororities if they have maximized their choices throughout the formal sorority recruitment process. The total number of additions for a sorority cannot exceed 5% of quota.

**Recolonize/Recharter** - Process where a fraternity or a sorority that was previously on campus, receives another charter for the same campus. Recolonization/Rechartment can happen because a chapter died out due to low numbers, or had their charter revoked.

**Retreat** - A trip, or sometimes just a sleep where the members bond and get to know each other.

**Ritual** - A secret ceremony of a Greek organization. Also, the formal document that contains the secret principles and ideals upon which the organization was founded. Ritual elements are sacred to each fraternity and sorority and have been handed down through generations. Only initiate members may be privy to rituals.

**Rec** - A recommendation, a letter sent by an alumni in good standing to the collegiate chapter where a PNM will be going through recruitment. The letter introduces the PNM to the chapter. Recs are perceived to be very important at large Southern schools, but they are rarely heard of in other areas of the country, like the Pacific Northwest. Recommendations can be thought of as extra credit in sorority recruitment - they are definitely not required, but they won't hurt you if you have them. Also known as a Reference.

**Recruitment** - The process where fraternities and sororities get new members. Potential new members tour each house, are invited to socials and choose the new members of their organization. The old term is rush, which is still used by the fraternities. The formal name is Formal Recruitment. This is traditional for IFC and NPC organizations. NPHC, NALFO, and NMGC practices differ.

**Recruitment Counselor** - A sorority member who leads a recruitment group (this is the practice of NPC). During recruitment they disaffiliate from their sorority so that they will not bias the potential new members. Formerly known as rho chi's, the new official term is Sigma Rho Chi (Sorority Recruitment Counselor). Many campuses have their own term, such as Pi Chi (Panhellenic Counselor), Rho Gamma (Recruitment Guide), Rho Alpha (Recruitment Advisor), Gamma Chi (Greek Counselor), Greek Life Guide, Alpha Chi, Pi Rho Chi etc etc.

**Rush** - See *Recruitment*. Rush is an outdated word that was replaced in 1999 by recruitment. Rush referred to the practice of fraternities "rushing" to the train station to meet the newest members of the freshman class of a college or university and pinning their fraternity colors on the freshmen to identify them as a potential member of that fraternity. We don't "rush" anymore.

**Sands** - An NPHC term for members of your new member class or Greeks who became members the same semester. Comes from the phrase "cross the burning sands" which means to cross over (Become initiated) into full membership.

**Silence/ Strict Silence** - The point from which recruitment starts until it ends, where no sisters in houses and PNM are allowed to speak about the details of recruitment.

**Sister** - Term that sorority members call each other.

**Snap bid** - A bid given to a PNM who was not placed during bid matching. The PNM would be on the sorority's list, but that PNM did not list the sorority on her bid card. Many schools will not allow someone who suicides to receive a snap bid. Some schools will allow a person who had to drop out of recruitment to receive a snap bid.

**Soror** – Means sister, this is a term used by NPHC sorority members to acknowledge one another. Rarely used among NPC sororities.

**Sorority** - A Greek organization for women. Many of the 26 NPC sororities are actually fraternities, as many were created before the word sorority was coined. Despite this, most will call themselves sororities.

**Step Show** - A show performed by NPHC, NALFO, and NMGC organizations (as well as other organizations) which include a combination of stepping and strolling among other activities.

**Stepping** - is a form of percussive dance in which the participant's entire body is used as an instrument to produce complex rhythms and sounds through a mixture of footsteps and hand claps

**Strolling** - An energetic, synchronized dance

**Suicide** - See *Intentional Single Preference*.

**Sweetheart** - Sorority member or other woman chosen to serve as a sweetheart of a fraternity, usually chosen because of work she's done with the fraternity. With the exception of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc, sweetheart organizations have been banned for NPHC organizations since 1990.

**Total/Ceiling** - The maximum number of members a sorority can have. Sororities can only exceed total during formal recruitment, if for example, taking new members would put them at 180 members and total is 140. If a sorority has obtained quota during recruitment and is still below total, that sorority may continue to ask new members to join.

(Taken from: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/greeklife/glossary.htm>)