

## **A Parent's Guide to Greek Life at Montclair State University**

Sending a child to college can be a challenging and stressful time in a parent's life. While at Montclair State University (MSU), your child will encounter many opportunities to become involved outside of their classroom experience. It is important that you, the parent, be educated about the enriching experience that your son or daughter will find by being involved in a fraternity or sorority at MSU.

### **What is being involved in a fraternity or sorority all about?**

You may have seen many shows on television and read in the newspaper about what being Greek is about. However, the reality is that often, the showcased incidents are particular situations that exhibit extreme behaviors of a particular group and not of fraternity and sorority life. What the media does not tell you is that there are many life-long benefits to membership in fraternities and sororities. At a growing university like MSU, membership in a fraternity or sorority offers a home away from home and makes the university setting a smaller more friendly community. Additionally, national research has shown that involvement in fraternities and sororities increases students' chances of graduating from college. As a life-long member of a fraternity or sorority, students are offered the opportunity to develop as leaders, serve the local community, and focus on academics, as well as their careers, by connecting with faculty, staff, and other students, local alumni members, advisors and other Greek organizations.

### **How Can Your Son / Daughter Benefit From Greek Membership?**

For your son or daughter, making the transition from high school or a community college to a four-year college or university may seem like an imposing challenge. One or more of the following questions may be on his/her mind:

- Will I fit in and make new friends?
- Will I be able to succeed academically?
- Will I be able to get involved in campus organizations and better my leadership skills?
- Will I find other people interested in the same things that I am?
- How can I prepare for my career?
- Will I feel like a part of the campus community or just another number?

Greek organizations exist as a proven support network for a student as he/she embarks on this new period in life.

Greek organizations can help personalize your student's college experience by offering a scholastic support system, hands-on experience in leading committees, managing budgets, and interacting with faculty and administrators; exposure to potential careers through educational programs and discussions with alumni; the chance to give back to the community through service projects; and close friends who will cheer them when they are successful and support them when times are tough. With all these opportunities available to them, it is no wonder that Greek Life members tend to graduate from college at a higher rate than those not involved in Greek Life.

(Some information taken from: [http://www.nicindy.org/going\\_greek/parents\\_guide/](http://www.nicindy.org/going_greek/parents_guide/))

### **My son or daughter is considering joining a fraternity or sorority, how should I advise them?**

Since joining a fraternity or sorority is a lifelong commitment, and there is an expense associated with membership, it should be a joint decision between student and parent. Consider sitting down with your son or daughter and research all of the organizations that are available to join. Utilizing local chapter and national websites are a great, convenient way to gather information. Feel free to contact students who are currently involved and their parents and ask them about their experience. In most cases, both students and parents will speak candidly about their Greek involvement.

### **Parents, consider asking the following questions before your child joins a fraternity or sorority:**

- What is expected of fraternity/sorority members?
- How will membership affect my student's academics?
- What leadership opportunities are available to students as both new members and active members?

- Does the chapter perform hands-on community service? If so, how often?
- Does the fraternity or sorority require members to live in the facility (if housing is available)? If so, for how long?
- What are the expenses associated with membership? How does this vary as a new member?
- What type of member is the chapter looking for?
- What values does this organization promote?
- Is the organization officially recognized by the University? If not, why?
- What is the time commitment?

### **I am not Greek, how can I learn more about it?**

Websites to take a closer look at:

- [www.montclair.edu/greekaffairs](http://www.montclair.edu/greekaffairs)
- [www.nicindy.org](http://www.nicindy.org)
- [www.npcwomen.org](http://www.npcwomen.org)
- [www.nphchq.org](http://www.nphchq.org)
- [www.profraternity.org](http://www.profraternity.org)

### **What safety risks are associated with membership in a fraternity or sorority?**

It can be perceived that fraternity or sorority membership may compromise a student's safety and well-being. At MSU, we are committed to the safety, well-being, and success of all of our students. In order to be recognized by the university, all Greek organizations are required to follow strict alcohol and risk management policies. The policies are in accordance with the state law of New Jersey, and are enforced by both MSU administrators and members of fraternities and sororities themselves. In addition, all organizations should have at least one alumni adviser and university faculty/staff advisor to assist and ensure that the chapter is promoting a safe environment for its members (both on and off campus.) Hazing is both against university policy as well as state law. Hazing as defined by MSU Code of Conduct is as follows:

#### **Hazing**

- Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health and/or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into, or affiliation with, any organization operating under registration with the University.
- Brutality of a physical nature such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements; forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substances; or other forced elements; or other forced activity which could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.
- Any activity which could subject the individual to mental stress such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced contact which could result in embarrassment, or any other activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.
- Any activity, as described above, upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with a Montclair State University organization may be directly or indirectly conditioned, shall be presumed to be a "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such an activity notwithstanding.

The university has zero tolerance for hazing! After prospective new members attend an Anti-Hazing workshop, both chapter and individual members sign an agreement stating they understand these rules and regulations and will not partake in any form of hazing. If you or someone you know is aware of any violations against these regulations, please contact the Center for Student Involvement staff immediately.