

**Sam Houston State University**  
**Dean of Students' Office/ Office of Greek Life**

**Fraternity and Sorority Guidelines**

*These guidelines describe the relationship between Sam Houston State University and the fraternities and sororities which are members of either the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) or the Multicultural Greek Council (MGC). These guidelines also describe the policies, procedures, standards and expectations governing fraternities and sororities at Sam Houston State University.*

**I. Relationship between Sam Houston State University and SHSU General Fraternities and Sororities.**

**A. Rationale:** The nationally or internationally-affiliated chapters of fraternities and sororities at Sam Houston State University operate in a mutually beneficial relationship with the University. Continuation of the University contribution through advising and support is essential to ensure maximum benefit of the community both to the University and to the individual students in the Greek community. Fraternities and sororities can make a positive contribution to the co-curricular experiences of student members and to the quality of student life in general.

**B. Policies:** Although all registered student organizations must comply with SHSU's *Student Guidelines*, the unique nature of fraternities and sororities requires additional consideration. University regulations and procedures affecting fraternity and sorority members also play an important role in maintaining the standards of the Greek community.

**C. Responsibilities of the SHSU Dean of Students Office:**

1. Through advising, to act as liaison between fraternities and sororities and the University to enhance Communication and public relations.
2. To provide information to the fraternities and sororities regarding University policies, procedures and regulations and State and local laws affecting fraternities and sororities.
3. To act as a source of information and as a liaison between new students and the fraternities and sororities. This may include information in University publications, mailing brochures to new students, and distributing lists of interested students to the organizations to facilitate membership selection.
4. To collect information on officers, members, grade point average standings, activities, policies, Council minutes, and updated constitutions and bylaws.
5. To act as a consultant to councils and chapters for their organizational development including: officer training, advising, attending meetings, and reviewing constitutions, bylaws, contracts, activity and other proposals.
6. To refer solicitors, leaders of philanthropic projects and others to fraternity organizations.
7. To assist all councils in investigating allegations of misconduct by fraternities or sororities and to facilitate due process in discipline matters (including attendance at discipline hearings, and notification of chapter leaders and advisors).
8. To organize leadership, educational and developmental programs including workshops, seminars, classes and retreats.
9. To publish newsletters and other materials for chapter officers, Greek Life community and the University.
10. Through correspondence, meetings, conferences, and telephone contacts, maintain cooperative relationships with local alumni, community groups, the professional staffs and volunteer officers of national fraternities and sororities, professional and fraternity-related organizations, campus organizations, public and private agencies and other University offices and departments. This can include regular meetings with the alumni chapter advisors.
11. To review and approve University policies, procedures and regulations relating to Greek Life.
12. To grant permission to colonize a chapter on the campus and to revoke registration for cause.
13. To assist chapters and councils in the promotion of their events.
14. To regularly recognize the positive endeavors of the Greek community and encourage recipients (individuals and chapters) to notify the University of awards, achievements, and community relations events.

#### **D. Responsibilities of the fraternities and sororities:**

1. To maintain objectives and activities of chapter which are consistent with and supportive of the mission of Sam Houston State University.
2. To encourage intellectual, personal, spiritual and social development of their student members. To comply with all applicable University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable laws and regulations, and to be responsible for compliance by chapter members of the same.
3. To be responsible, as a community and as individual chapters for the conduct of the chapter members at chapter sponsored functions, both on and off campus.
4. To promote conduct consistent with high values and ethics, based on the purposes and principles of fraternity and sorority founding.
5. To operate from sound business practices with respect to chapter finances and business relations with the chapter members, the University and the community.
6. The chapter president agrees to accept full responsibility for the chapter's adherence to the Constitutions, Bylaws, rules and discipline procedures of the Dean of Students Office, University policies and directives by authorized University officials, the *SHSU Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities*, and local, State and federal laws. Accordingly, the chapter president must become familiar with such policies, laws, regulations, directives, and procedures and must educate the chapter membership.
7. Each chapter must maintain an active membership of ten or more members.
8. No fraternity or sorority may accept (associate) or initiate any individual who does not have a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point average. Individual councils or associations may set higher required minimum grade point averages for members, and each fraternity and sorority will be subject to the applicable required minimum grade point average of its council or association.
9. It is the right of the undergraduates in each chapter to select their own members within the context of allowing no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ethnic background, age, marital status, sexual orientation, mental disability or physical disability.

#### **E. Scholarship**

The fundamental reason for enrolling in a university is to acquire the educational foundation necessary to function effectively as a citizen. The range of academic programs offered by Sam Houston State University provides the opportunity for all students to prepare themselves to assume in government, in business and industry and in the professions. The academic progress of all members considered collectively indicates the relative strength and vitality of the organization. The standards in this section reflect the central importance academic achievement should occupy in the life of each organization at Sam Houston State University.

#### **F. Standards:**

1. Organizations nurture academic excellence within the campus community by providing continuing and new members appropriate incentives and resources to facilitate scholastic achievement.
2. Organizations create an environment conducive to academic success by offering education programs to members maintaining acceptable academic standing and to members confronting academic distress.
3. Organizations maintain a minimum overall organization grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.00 scale.
4. Organizations work closely with a faculty or staff advisor who is an employee of the institution and whose influences are directed primarily toward organization scholarship and secondarily toward other organization obligations at the University.
5. No chapter shall sponsor an auxiliary organization or activity which connotes membership of any kind in their group (e.g., "little sisters," "little brothers," etc.) other than that full membership as ascribed by the (inter)national constitution.

## **II. Guidelines for Fraternity/Sorority Activities:**

### **A. Approval, Review and Sponsorship of Activities**

1. Definition of Chapter Sponsored Activity: An event will be considered a chapter-sponsored activity under one or more of the following conditions:
  - a. The event is advertised and the advertisement makes any mention of the fraternity or sorority.
  - b. The activity is discussed during a chapter meeting; information about the activity is distributed during a chapter meeting; and/or the activity is mentioned in the minutes of a chapter meeting.
  - c. Transportation to the activity is provided by the chapter.
  - d. The chapter creates or causes to be created any promotional materials for the activity, including t-shirts, cups, etc.
  - e. The chapter is involved in any fashion with the sale of tickets for the activity or the sale of promotional items which mention the activity.
  - f. The chapter provides maps, information or tickets to the activity for its members and/or guests.
  - g. The activity is listed on the chapter calendar.
  - h. Greek Life sponsored events such as Greek Week and chapter sponsored events such as fraternity philanthropy weeks are considered sponsored by all chapters who participate.
  - i. Participants consider, refer to or classify the event as a chapter event.
2. Chapters are responsible for events they sponsor. When an event is sponsored by more than one organization, each sponsor is responsible for all activities arising out of or relating to the event, including but not limited to adequate planning, actual event behavior, and post-event accountability for all in attendance.
3. Chapters are responsible for knowledge and understanding of all University policies and procedures regarding risk management which includes, but are not limited to: submission of appropriate paperwork, security, and guest lists.

### **B. Advertising and Publicity**

1. Chapters or Councils may not co-sponsor any of their activities or display advertising on or off campus for an alcohol distributor or tavern (tavern is defined as an establishment generating more than half of annual gross sales from alcohol).
2. Alcoholic beverages may not be implied, stated or pictured in chapter advertisements.
3. All publicity is expected to be in good taste and in compliance with University posting policies.

### **C. Alcoholic Beverages and Illegal Substances**

1. In addition to the following policies, fraternities and sororities and their members are required to comply with the University's policy for the use of alcoholic beverages when sponsoring or participating in any activity.
2. Use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited.
3. In promoting events, alcoholic beverages may not be referred to in publicity, including signs, fliers, mailings, promotional materials including t-shirts and glassware etc. and media announcements. Use of words such as "beer," "brew," "wine," "cocktails," "open bar," "booze," "mixed drinks," "spirits," etc. (list is not all-inclusive — other terms may be considered violations) is prohibited; however, use of such terms as "beverages," and "refreshments," etc. is acceptable. Illustrations must not make reference to alcoholic beverages (i.e., no pictures of kegs, cocktail glasses, beer mugs, etc.). Social event themes may not include alcohol or alcohol related themes (e.g. Margaritaville Party).
4. At all chapter sponsored events where alcoholic beverages are consumed, provisions shall be provided for the free and conspicuous distribution of non-alcoholic beverages in adequate supply. An "adequate supply" is defined as a quantity sufficient to provide at least one beverage serving per hour for all members and guests. All events serving alcohol must provide substantial, high in protein, non-salty food, especially during the first and last hours of the event.

5. No fraternity or sorority shall permit any person who is under the age of twenty-one or anyone who is obviously intoxicated to consume alcoholic beverages at chapter sponsored events. Sponsoring or co-sponsoring chapters will be responsible for checking ID to determine legal drinking age. An organization sponsoring or co-sponsoring an event shall make reasonable efforts to provide for the safety of any members or guests who exhibit intoxication.
6. No fraternity or sorority shall at any time expect, suggest or compel members or new members/pledges/associates to consume alcoholic beverages.
7. Fraternities and sororities must be familiar with and comply with State of Texas laws regulating the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. No tickets or invitations may be sold to chapter or council events where alcoholic beverages will be present, unless alcohol will be provided through a third party vendor location.
8. Organized competitions involving the consumption of alcoholic beverages (chugging contests, "beer baseball," "quarters," etc.) are prohibited at all chapter sponsored events.
9. Fraternities shall comply with their council's regulations establishing a completely dry fraternity recruitment. Sororities shall comply with their council's regulations prohibiting alcoholic beverages at recruiting events. **No alcoholic beverages shall be present at any chapter or Council recruitment function, regardless of location.** A rush/recruitment function is defined as any chapter activity occurring during the official rush/recruitment period established by Greek Life or any event held at any time where the primary purpose is membership recruitment.
10. No alcoholic beverages shall be present at any new member/associate member programs or activities, including but not limited to: initiation or pre-initiation activities; new member/associate member retreat; new member presentations; and big brother/sister revealing.
12. No chapter may purchase alcoholic beverages through the use of any chapter funds or credits nor may the purchase of same be undertaken or coordinated by any member on behalf of the chapter. Purchasing bulk alcohol from a distributor and then reselling the alcohol to the members and guests at the function is prohibited. Chapters may not sell, in any fashion, alcohol to members, pledges/associates or guests.
13. The purchase and/or use of any bulk quantity of alcoholic beverages or providing a common source of alcohol (e.g. kegs, "party balls," alcoholic punch, coolers filled with canned beer, open bars, etc.) is expressly prohibited.
14. Chapters may host up to two (2) events an academic year at a third party vendor without a guest list. Outside those two events, non-members attending a chapter function may do so only by personal invitation of a chapter member who shall assume personal responsibility for the welfare of the guest and any damage to property caused by said guest. Chapters must abide by the guest list limitations set forth by the University's Student Guidelines.
15. A list of members, new members/associates with their birthdates and non-members should be located at the entrance of the event so their invitation and identification can be checked.
16. In the event a member is a campus resident and returns to campus from an event due to the inability to care for himself or herself, the chapter is responsible for contacting the Resident Assistant on duty. If the RA is not available, the chapter shall be responsible for contacting the University Police Department.
17. These policies shall also apply to the Interfraternity Council, the Panhellenic Association, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the Multicultural Greek Council, Greek Week, Order of Omega, and all other inter-Greek functions.

#### **D. Hazing**

1. **Members of fraternities and sororities may not engage in any hazing activities.** Hazing is prohibited by both Texas law and SHSU policy. Engaging in hazing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation from the University, as well as suspension or revocation of a chapter's registration.
2. The following Hazing Policy was passed by the Texas State Legislature relating to offenses related to hazing at or in connection with an educational institution.
  - A. "Educational institution" includes a public or private:
    1. high school; or
    2. college, university, or other postsecondary educational establishment.
  - B. "New Member" means any person who has been accepted by, is considering an offer of membership from, or is in the process of qualifying for membership in any organization.
  - C. "New Member Process" means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
  - D. "Student" means any person who:

1. is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
  2. has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
  3. intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after a period of scheduled vacation.
- E. "Organization" means a fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or service, social, or a similar group, whose members are primarily students at an educational institution.
- F. "Hazing" means any intentional knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are students at an educational institution. The term includes but is not limited to:
1. Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
  2. Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
  3. Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or which adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
  4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely affects the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subsection;
  5. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the Penal Code. Sec. 4.52.

#### G. Personal Hazing Offense

A person commits an offense if the person:

1. engages in hazing;
2. solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing;
3. intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur; or
4. has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report said knowledge in writing to the Dean of Students or other appropriate officials of the institution.
5. The offense of failing to report is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, confinement in county jail for not more than 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.
6. Any other offense under this section which does not cause serious bodily injury to another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, confinement in county jail for not less than 90 days nor more than 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.
7. Any other offense under this section which causes serious bodily injury to another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000, confinement in county jail for not less than 180 days nor more than one year, or both such fine and confinement.
8. Any other offense under this section which causes the death of another is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000, confinement in county jail for not less than one year nor more than two years, or both such fine and confinement.
9. Except when an offense causes the death of a student in sentencing a person convicted of an offense under this section, the court may require the person to perform community service, subject to the same conditions imposed on community service probationers by Subdivision (1), Subsection (e), and subsections (c), (d), (g), (h) of section 10A. Article 42.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, for an appropriate period of time in lieu of confinement in county jail or in lieu of a part of the time the person is sentenced

to confinement in county jail.

#### H. Organization Hazing Offense

1. An organization commits an offense if the organization condones or encourages hazing or if an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.
2. An offense under this section is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000, or if a court finds that the offense caused personal injury, property damage, or other loss. The court may sentence the organization to pay a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than double the amount loss or expenses incurred because of such injury, damage, or loss.

#### I. Consent Not a Defense

1. It is not a defense to prosecution for the offense under this subchapter that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

#### E. Enforcement

- a. It shall be the specific responsibility of the chapter president to see that this policy is communicated each semester to all members (initiates and new members/associate members), and to see that his/her chapter strictly adheres to the policy.
- b. Fraternities and sororities should understand that not only is the chapter responsible for preventing hazing in any form, but any and all members involved in a hazing violation will be held personally accountable for their actions.
- c. Chapters are responsible for controlling the actions of their alumni members during initiation or pre-initiation activities.
- d. The Dean of Students Office will be notified promptly of all alleged hazing incidents; the handling of such cases is subject to the Dean of Students.
- e. The national/international office of a fraternity or sorority will be notified of any hazing charges pending against their chapter and will be informed of the disposition of the case. For serious or repeated violations, the national/international office will be requested to take appropriate corrective action in addition to the sanctions imposed by the University.
- f. Any established hazing case may result in revocation of registration for the chapter and a recommendation to the national/international office of the fraternity or sorority of revocation of their charter.
- g. Fraternities and sororities are expected to comply with the provisions of all four councils Constitutions and Bylaws.
- h. Hazing is a crime in the State of Texas, as defined above. Incidents of hazing will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency if the investigation of the incident provides sufficient evidence to indicate that the matter falls within the hazing definition in the Penal Code.

#### F. Harassment and Abusive Behavior

1. Fraternities and sororities may not engage in any organizational activities involving sexually abusive behavior (whether verbal or physical) or behavior that is lewd, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate.
2. Fraternities and sororities may not engage in any organizational activities involving physical or verbal behavior that makes persons the subject of harassment, intimidation, or hostility because of their race, religion, color, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin.
3. Fraternity and sorority members shall not engage in any physical abuse of the person or property of any member of the campus community nor may chapter members threaten such physical abuse.

#### G. Governance

- A. The University recognizes that the governing bodies for the Greek community are the Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, and the Interfraternity Council.

- B.** Each sorority and fraternity also has an executive board, a constitution, and bylaws which govern the chapter. In addition, each chapter must abide by its national/international organization's constitution and bylaws.
- C.** When a complaint is received by the Dean of Students Office regarding a fraternity or sorority, the president of the accused fraternity/sorority will be notified, and a copy of the notice will be sent to the chapter advisor/advisory board chair of the accused fraternity/sorority.
- D.** Discipline matters are normally referred to the Greek Life Staff.
- E.** All disciplinary action is subject to the review and approval of the Dean of Students Office.

#### **H. Revision and Review**

- A.** Revisions to SHSU Greek Life Fraternity and Sorority Guidelines procedures are subject to review by all four councils and approval by the Dean of Students Office.
- B.** Prior to any revision, regardless of the source of the proposed revision, input shall be sought from the SHSU Dean of Students Office, all four councils and the chapter alumni advisors.
- C.** All four Councils may initiate a proposal for revision of this document by a joint recommendation. The Greek chapter alumni advisors may initiate a proposal for revision of this document by joint resolution. The Dean of Students Office may initiate a proposal for revision of this document and may establish procedures to address proposed revisions which will include the submission of the proposed changes to all four councils for input prior to approval of the revisions by the Dean of Students Office.
- D.** This document shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the Dean of Students Office.

#### **I. Advisors**

Advisors are critical to the success of the individual chapters and the Greek system. They provide continuity from year to year, wisdom from experience, and a perspective broader than that of the undergraduate members. It is the responsibility of the undergraduate members to regularly seek out the advice of their respective chapter advisors. Each chapter must have a chapter advisor and/or alumni advisory board. At a minimum, the University expects the following of the chapter advisor/alumni advisory board:

- 1.** Meet regularly with chapter officers,
- 2.** Be familiar with University policies governing fraternities and sororities and ensure that the chapter complies with such policies,
- 3.** Regularly review chapter finances,
- 4.** Review the chapter's new member development (pledging) program and ensure that no chapter activities involve hazing in any form,
- 5.** Assist University officials in dealing with problems or other situations involving the chapter,
- 6.** Be represented at meetings of chapter Greek advisors,
- 7.** To attend and support chapter activities.
- 8.** Each chapter must remain in good standing with the national/international fraternity or sorority.
- 9.** As advisors are critical to the success of organization, it is required as a part of the annual registration that each organization recruit a faculty or staff advisor in addition to their alumni advisors. These advisor names should be reported to the Department of Student Activities at the beginning of each academic year.