



## **Advisors' Manual**



Dear Greek Advisors:

This **Greek Life Advisor Manual** is an accumulation of resources that will assist you in the advancement of your fraternity or sorority at Sam Houston State University. We know that navigating policies and procedures can sometimes be complex. It is our hope that we will work with students, advisors, and university administrators to provide any and all resources that are needed in a clear and concise manner.

The Greek Life Office is committed to providing all resources that we possibly can. This includes but is not limited to emails communicating due dates and important information that is relevant to your organization, an advisor roundtable each semester, and trainings and workshops as necessary.

I hope that you find this manual to be a treasured resource. Please provide us with any feedback or resources you feel may be of a benefit to yourself and the other advisors; so that updates and enhancements can be made.

Good luck in your position and we look forward to working with you. We appreciate the time that you have taken to be involved with our students. If there is anything we can do for you while in your position, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Fraternally,

*SHSU Greek Life*



## **Our History**

Since 1959, Sam Houston State University has boasted a growing Greek population, currently comprised of twenty plus IFC, NPHC, MGC, and Panhellenic organizations. Every year, SHSU Greek Organizations complete thousands of hours of community service, raised tens of thousands of dollars for local and national charities, and is heavily involved in non-Greek student organizations across campus.

Based around the core values of Academics, Leadership, Personal Development, Service, and Brotherhood/Sisterhood, Greeks at SHSU share in an inspired vision to model the way as leaders for future Greeks, challenge the process of outdated ‘traditions’ that no longer have a place in their organizations, and enable others to achieve their goals within the Greek community. The impact of membership in a Greek organization is felt throughout an individual’s life, and having a strong Greek community that supports healthy growth and opportunities for leadership gives these individuals a new perspective as they develop during college and beyond.

By choosing to become a chapter advisor for an organization in this great community, you are taking on the responsibility of supporting this growth and encouraging leadership, as well as aiding the chapter in any way that you can. Part of this development is being confronted with new obstacles every day, and there will be times when the individuals under your care look to you for answers and guidance. Being well informed of the student policies set up by both the Sam Houston State University and by each individual organization, as well as services provided at SHSU, will help to make you an effective and efficient advisor.



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## **Advisor Information**

In requiring fraternities and sororities to have chapter and campus advisors, the University expects that advisors will take an active role in the organization. The nature and style of that role is left to the determination of the organization and its advisor. The role of the chapter advisor is to guide, advise and support the chapter and its officers and monitor their progress.

All student organizations at the Sam Houston State University must have an on campus advisor, chosen by the students in the organization, who is a SHSU employee. This individual can be a faculty or staff member and can assist the chapter, alumni, and advisors in the development of the chapter, its members, and their programs.

A chapter may choose to have one chapter advisor or a team of advisors to provide support. The chapter advisor needs to be willing to devote significant time to the chapter, skilled in organizational and leadership development, and proficient in their inter/national organization's policies and their interpretation. It is through committed alumnae support that chapters achieve their greatest success.

The campus advisor should be well versed on campus resources and University policies. It is not a requirement that the campus advisor share the same organization affiliation as the chapter. For example, there are many effective female campus advisors who advise a male fraternity and vice versa. There are also instances where a faculty or staff member may be a member of an organization not on our campus and they are serving in the campus advisor role. The role of the campus advisor is very important. The students may be able to meet with this individual on a more regular basis in order to have forms signed or answer questions. Campus officials may also be able to receive information that is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).



## **How to Be An Effective Advisor**

***Be honest.*** It isn't your job to be the organizations best friend, it is your job to advise them in times of need. Telling your chapter what they want to hear or siding with the popular decisions/majority when you think that these actions will incur consequences benefits your chapter in no way. The right decision or opinion is not always the popular one, but it is better to remind your chapter to live by its ritual than to explain to parents why their child is in trouble.

***Be aware.*** As an advisor, it is important to always be up to date on your chapter's current events and decisions so that you can advise them appropriately in all situations. This also means being aware of campus policies, rules, and programs offered, as well as required forms and documents, that can help the students in your organization during their time in college so that they have every opportunity to succeed.

***Be supportive.*** During your time of advising a chapter there will always be changes in leadership by election and member composition by graduation and you will encounter shifting and evolving concerning the organizations direction. Popular ideas will come and go, some being forgotten quickly while others are vehemently pursued and it isn't always your job to correct or involve yourself in these changes. In the end, this is the students' organization and it is their privilege to shape it by their own designs and your position is to support them, as long as they are not breaking rules or laws.



## **Expectations**

1. Meet with the chapter leadership on a regular (at least monthly) basis.
2. Supervise chapter events and functions.
3. Serve as a resource for the chapter in terms of alumni contacts, education, conflict resolution, etc.
4. Keep the chapter aware of inter/national laws, codes, mission, and goals as expressed by that chapter's headquarters.
5. Empower the chapter so that it can stand on its own and make sure that members hold each other accountable for their actions consistent with the values of the organization and University.
6. Be an ambassador on campus for your chapter, meeting with Office of Greek Life staff and other departments to ensure your chapters continued success and well-being, as well as making yourself visible.
7. Educate the chapter about inter/national policies, state and local laws, and the chapter code of conduct / [Code of Student Conduct](#).

## **Always Remember:**

1. You are a *volunteer*; your chapter should not set unrealistic goals for you as you will have other commitments that require your time and attention.
2. Each chapter is different, empower them to forge their own path.
3. Common sense is almost always the best course of action. There will be times when there may not be one right answer, and it is during these times when wise judgment is needed.



## **Our Councils**

### **Interfraternity Council**

IFC is the governing body of the nine fraternities at Sam Houston State University. The IFC coordinates joint activities, programming and provides support to members' chapters.

### **Multicultural Greek Council**

MGC is the governing body for the eight culturally-based fraternities and sororities at Sam Houston State University. The MGC coordinates educational and service programming for the member chapters.

### **National Pan-Hellenic Council**

NPHC is the governing body of nine historically African-American fraternities and sororities, three of which are at Sam Houston State University. The NPHC coordinates educational and service programming for the member chapters.

### **PanHellenic Association**

PanHellenic is the governing body for the five sororities at Sam Houston State University affiliated with the National PanHellenic Conference (NPC). PanHellenic is a legislative body consisting of an executive board and chapter delegates.



# **Greek Life at Sam Houston State University**

## **Interfraternity Council**

- Alpha Tau Omega
- Delta Tau Delta
- Kappa Alpha
- Kappa Sigma
- Phi Delta Theta
- Phi Gamma Delta (FIJI)
- Pi Kappa Alpha
- Sigma Chi
- Sigma Phi Epsilon
- Tau Kappa Epsilon
- Theta Chi

## **Panhellenic Association**

- Alpha Delta Pi
- Alpha Chi Omega
- Alpha Omicron Pi
- Sigma Sigma Sigma
- Zeta Tau Alpha

## **National Pan-Hellenic Council**

- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

## **Multicultural Greek Council**

- Delta Xi Nu Multicultural Sorority
- Kappa Delta Chi
- Lambda Theta Alpha Latina Sorority, Inc.
- Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc.
- Omega Delta Phi Fraternity
- Sigma Kappa Omega Sorority
- Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity
- Sigma Lambda Gamma Sorority



## Recruitment

### Dates and Times:

- The dates and times of both spring and fall recruitment for PanHellenic and the Interfraternity Council are established by the governing boards before the new semester begins. Once these dates and times are established, announcements are made in council meetings and emails are sent out to chapter presidents so that they can distribute the information to their members and advisor.
- For the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the Multicultural Greek Council, Intake packets are filled out every semester detailing if that particular organization will or will not participate in Intake for the fall or spring, and these packets are turned in to the Office of Greek Life.

### Requirements for prospective new members:

- First semester freshmen that wish to go through recruitment or intake must enter SHSU in good standing.
- Transfer or returning SHSU students that wish to go through recruitment or intake must have a 2.5 GPA, and will submit transfer transcripts from their previous institution to the Office of Greek Life that shows this.
- All prospective members **must** provide documentation of the required GPA to the Office of Greek Life before given a bid or permitted to participate in the intake process.

### Assembly/Showcases/Informational

- Typically, these events are utilized by the MGC and NPHC councils which often occur at the beginning of the fall and spring semester. The purpose of these events is to give students information about the council, how to get involved, and answer any questions students may have.



### Membership Intake

- Membership intake is typically utilized by NPHC and MGC organizations.
- While the actual intake process may vary for each organization, the process typically begins by attending an informational or interest meeting.

## Officer Transition

One of the most important functions of an advisor is to assist in the transition from one set of organization officers to the next. As the stability of the organization, the advisor has seen changes, knows what works and can help maintain continuity. Investing time in a good officer transition early on will mean less time spent throughout the year nursing new officers through the fall semester. Student Activities staff is here to help.

- The key to a successful transition is making sure new officers know their jobs BEFORE they take office. Expectations should be clearly defined.
- Talk about what the officers hope to accomplish in the forthcoming year. Assess the officer's role in the organization. What are the goals and expectations of each position?
- The advisor's role in this process is to provide historical background when needed, help keep goals specific, attainable and measurable and provide advice on SHSU's policies and procedures.

### Methods for Planning an Officer Transition Retreat:

There are a number of ways to conduct the officer transition. If the organization already has a good system in place, don't change it. As an advisor, your job will be to provide a structure and schedule for any potential retreats or meetings and to facilitate discussion. The following two methods are examples of two commonly used methods.



- The **team effort** involves the out-going officer board, the advisor, and the incoming-officer board. This method involves a retreat or series of meetings where out-going officer's work with incoming-officers on:
  - Past records/notebooks for their office and updating those together
  - Upcoming/incomplete projects
  - Anything the new officers need to know to do their job effectively
  - Challenges and setbacks
- While it is ideal to have the outgoing officer team assist in training the incoming officers, often it is left up to the advisor to educate the incoming officers. With **One-on-One Training, Advisor with Officers**, there should be a joint meeting of the new officers. After that meeting, the advisor should meet individually with each officer; examine the notebook of the previous officer (or create a new one).
  - Update each section of notebooks, or talk about what should go in a new one. If officers do not have a notebook, take the time to create one.
  - Do not throw old materials away!
  - Each pair of officers should discuss the following:
    - (1) With whom did the outgoing officer interact most in Student Activities, Catering, SGA, other student organizations, SHSU administration and in the community?
    - With the departments/areas listed above, in what capacity did the outgoing officer work with them?
  - What University paperwork is this position responsible for completing?
  - What University procedures did the outgoing officer have the most trouble with and how can the incoming officer avoid those troubles?

**For help with planning an Officer Transition Retreat, the Greek Life Office is always more than willing to assist you in any way possible. Also, please feel free to use this outline in planning any kind of retreat, meeting, or seminar.**



## **Scholarship**

### **Organizational Good Standing:**

- In order for your organization to remain in good standing with Sam Houston State University, they must abide by the guidelines found [here](#).
- Organizations are expected to maintain an overall GPA that is higher than the all men's/women's average at SHSU

### **Individual Good Standing:**

- Student GPA requirements are often enforced by the chapter, and therefore vary depending on which organization you are working with. Speak with your organization's president if you do not know what the GPA expectations are for your members.

### **The Learning Center:**

- The Learning Center offers tutoring and study skills assessment to help students that are trying to cope with a heavy workload or whose grades are slipping. From speed reading sessions to online tutoring, this department offers individuals a perspective on study habits and the development of skills to help students better accomplish required tasks.



## **Risk Management**

As an advisor, one of your major duties is to help student organization leaders assess and mitigate the risks of proposed functions. The University expects you to help students practice “risk reduction” when planning activities.

Webster’s dictionary defines risk as, “The chance of injury, damage or loss; a hazard,” and defines management as “The implementation of collaborative efforts to coordinate resources and planning that will establish the most effective climate for growth and development. It is not meant to be synonymous with control.”

In other words, you as an advisor should collaboratively help students prevent injuries, loss, or damage to public reputation (either your own or Sam Houston State University). Each national organization produces a comprehensive risk management plan. Advisors are strongly advised to know it in detail, and campus advisors are encouraged to have a strong understanding of University protocols and procedures. Below are some general guidelines for assessing risk. Nothing below should conflict with your rules and procedures.

The first step in managing risk is knowing what the student organization officers are doing. How can you effectively advise students of risks without knowing what is going on? As an advisor you should be engaged in every phase of event planning and preparation.

The officers of the organization may need you to attend meetings prior to the occurrence of an event, or, if the officers are very experienced, may only need meet with you periodically for updates and guidance. If the students in your organization are not forthcoming with information about future events, you need to proactively go and get the information from them.



## **Reducing Risk**

Once you know what the students are planning, the next step in risk management is to help them reflect on the event. While there is no such thing as a risk-free event, some things carry more risk than others. The simplest way to identify risky behavior is to ask, "Can someone get injured as a result of attending or participating in this event?" Or, "Would we want our name mentioned with this kind of event in the newspaper?" If the answer is yes, the event can be considered risky. For instance, events where alcohol is consumed, events promoting rough physical contact (i.e. sporting activities) or events sponsored in facilities of questionable safety pose high risks.

Other kinds of events, such as staffing an information table, conducting a meeting or retreat or sponsoring a luncheon, pose very little risk. Most events can have their risk managed reasonably. However, there are certain kinds of function where no amount of planning can adequately address the risk and these functions must NEVER occur. These include, but are not limited to: underage drinking, hazing, fighting, sexist/racist/homophobic behavior. The University does not sanction any event where these kinds of activities take place, nor will any fundraising activity be approved containing these activities.

## **Your Role**

When students propose a risky activity, don't assume the University will veto it immediately. Help them see the risks involved by asking questions.

- "What would happen if someone fell during this event?"
- "How do you plan to address someone who is intoxicated?"
- "How do you plan to prevent underage students from drinking?"
- "Would we want to read about this in the newspaper?"

By helping them plan for worst-case scenarios you are meeting your obligation as an advisor without telling them what to do. However, with that said, there are certain things you are honor-bound to stop, such as underage drinking, hazing, fighting (by calling the police, not by trying to break it up yourself), sexist behavior and racist behavior. Usually confronting such behaviors directly is enough to end them. While it may make you personally uncomfortable to confront these situations, both SHSU policy and the law are on your side.



# Hazing

Sam Houston State University does not tolerate hazing in any form or capacity, and any known hazing practices need to be reported immediately to ensure the safety of the students within that organization. Hazing will almost always be well hidden, so it is important as an advisor to your chapter that you are always vigilant in keeping the potential members for your organization safe. Hazing has many forms and styles, and not knowing them can be dangerous.

## **Subtle Hazing:**

- Quizzing or testing on non-pertinent information (information that has nothing to do with the organization)
- Social isolation of new members
- Denying privileges to new members that are guaranteed for active members
- Requiring new members to always be in possession of certain items

## **Harassment Hazing:**

- Verbal abuse, threats, or implied threats
- Sleep deprivation
- Forced degrading, cruel, or humiliating acts

## **Violent Hazing:**

- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Paddling or other forms of assault
- Abduction, kidnap, or bondage
- Public nudity
- Expectation of committing illegal actions



In general, hazing can be any act that is seen as demeaning or degrading, involves alcohol or drugs, has the risk of injury, or active members are unwilling to divulge information about certain events that have taken place.

It is not uncommon for hazing rituals or practices to be placed under the banner of “tradition,” and once this has happened it can be extremely difficult for those practices to change. The mindset of the organizations shifts to “but we’ve always done it this way” and excuses may be offered for why certain practices are allowed. These can include, but are not limited to: this isn’t even as rough as it used to be; it’s not hazing, its character building; I went through it, my big went through it, and my grand big went through it, so how can it be that bad; if they can’t handle this, then maybe they aren’t a good fit for our organization.

Changing these “traditions” can be difficult and met with strong resistance, and it is not the role of the advisor to storm into a chapter room and try to force change on the group. Instead, you should arrange meetings with the leaders of the organization and discuss the problem in private, as well as provide solutions. If the hazing practices are severe, then it may become necessary for the Office of Greek Life or Dean of Students to become involved.

Protecting the reputation of your chapter by keeping hazing problems “in-house” can lead to more severe consequences later or worse, the injury and possible death of a student at the hands of hazing practices. An organization that relies on hazing rituals and traditions needs to reassess its role on a university campus and its contributions to its inter/national or local organization.

A great resource to utilize for yourself and for your organizations is:

<http://www.stophazing.org/>



## **Greek Life Resources and STAR Program**

The following forms are found on the Office of Greek Life [Resource](#) page, followed by a brief description of their purpose. Chapter advisors are encouraged to review the SHSU Greek Life Resource page, and instructions on how to do so, as well as a password, can be acquired from the Office of Greek Life.

### **STAR Program**

This annual accreditation and assessment report is typically due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, every academic year. STAR is used by the Office of Greek Life to ensure that our organizations are completing necessary tasks and engaging themselves in both the SHSU and Huntsville community as well as reporting all events and programs that fulfill national requirements.

### **Intent of Intake and Grade Release Form**

This consent form allows the Greek Life Office to release a student's grades to their chapter or on-campus advisor, and is also used to add students to their organizations roster.

### **Risk Management Form for Social Events**

This form is utilized by student organizations to register a social event with the Greek Life/Dean of Students Office.

### **Greek Life Travel Packet**

This form is used to detail travel plans and responsibilities for the chapter when traveling out of Huntsville to attend chapter sponsored retreats and/or social events.

### **Greek Life Roster Changes and Update Forms**

These forms are used by organizations to update their current roster, which can be for financial, academic, behavior or other reasons.



### Officer Transition Manual

This form when new officers are elected for a chapter or Greek council to properly understand the full scope of their responsibility and expectations of someone in their position. You are encouraged to involve the previous person(s) who served in the role(s) in the transition workshop to offer advice for the new officer(s).

### Greek Life Policies

These policies are the rules and regulations all Greek organizations are to adhere to remain in good standing with the university.

### Incident Report Form

This form should be used to report any violations of University policy or code of conduct as they relate to Greek Life, Sam Houston State University, Council, and/or individual chapter policy(s).

**If the form you are seeking cannot be found or you are having difficulty locating specific information, or if you have any questions about the resources, please feel free to contact the Greek Life Office.**

## Event Registration

### Events a Sorority/Fraternity host at a Third Party Venue:

- A Social Event Form can be picked up in the Office of Greek Life or downloaded online at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/greeklife/resources/>
- Turn this form into the Office of Greek Life at least 14 days prior to the event.

### Events on campus:



- Room/Venue reservation forms may be found in the Lowman Student Center office in room 311 located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Student center, or online at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/lowman-student-center/services/forms.html>

- Reservation forms must be utilized to reserve spaces at the Student Center, LSC Mall Area/ Bearkat Plaza, CHSS building, or Farrington Pit.

- For events outside of the areas mentioned above, such as the Intramural Fields, Coliseum, or Auditorium, please contact those offices for detailed instructions on how to reserve that space.

- For the Intramural Field contact Rec Sports:

- [www.shsu.edu/dept/recreational-sports/](http://www.shsu.edu/dept/recreational-sports/)

- For the Coliseum go to: [www.shsu.edu/dept/recreational-sports/facilities/bernard-g.-johnson-coliseum.html](http://www.shsu.edu/dept/recreational-sports/facilities/bernard-g.-johnson-coliseum.html)

## **Conduct Review Process**

In the event that your organization receives a Notice of Complaint from the Sam Houston State University Dean of Students office, the following is the process that this complaint will take from start to finish.

The Dean of Students office first reviews any alleged incident of misconduct filed against a student organization, and if they find it to be credible then they will complete an investigation of allegations. DOS will then send a Notice of Complaint to an organization's president, chapter advisor, as well as to the national headquarters address that the university has on file. A DOS representative will then hold a conference with the organization's president to discuss the alleged incident and hear any additional details as well as witness testimony. Advisors are permitted to attend this conference, but it is important to remember that this is a conversation between the representative and the student.



If the Dean of Students Representative finds significant evidence through a thorough investigation that a student organization did engage in misconduct, then that organization will receive a Notice of Conduct Findings no later than five (5) business days after the conference was held. This notice will inform the organization of the violation and assigned sanction. If no misconduct is found, the organization will receive a notice that no further actions will be taken. At this point a student organization can submit an appeal request for reconsideration if their case is reviewable, and this must be submitted to the DOS Representative within five (5) days of receiving a Notice of Conduct Findings.

**For a complete list of forms associated with conduct such as the Request for Review, Student Complaint Form, and Initial Conference explanation, etc. you can go to <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/>**

## **Additional Resources**

You are always encouraged to meet with the Greek Life staff anytime you have questions or concerns, and information on our council's bylaws and constitution as well as information on your chapter can be found at:  
<http://www.shsu.edu/greeklife>.

In addition to our page, please feel free to utilize the following links to different departments on the Sam Houston State University campus for programming, events, and general information.

**Student Health Center:** <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/student-health-center/>

- Doctors' appointments, free flu shots, optometrist and more

**Counseling Center:** <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/counseling/>

- Free counseling for individuals or group therapy.



**Alcohol & Drug Abuse Initiative:** <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/adai/>

- Substance abuse literature and programming, presentations available for organizations

**SAM Center:** <http://www.shsu.edu/centers/sam-center/>

- Study skills and speed-reading classes, supplemental instruction and volunteer tutoring

**SHSU Police Department:** <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/public-safety/upd/index.html>

- Offers programming such as drunk goggles, ID checking at events, and work social events for fraternities and sororities.

**Dean of Students:** <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/>

- SOC Team, offers aid and information for students in distress  
- Code of Student Conduct can be found on their website.

**Student Activities:** <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/student-activities/>

- Campus Events and information source of general student organizations