

Greek Life Glossary

Active- the exact meaning of this term varies from group to group, but generally it means an undergraduate who currently pays dues and participates in chapter events.

Alumnus/alumna- a member who has graduated. Alumnus is the masculine, alumna the feminine.

Alumni/alumnae- the plurals of alumnus and alumna, respectively. When both men and women are meant, alumni is the term most often used, although alumna is also appropriate (it's the Latin neuter plural).

Bid- a formal invitation to join a Greek organization.

Big Brother/Big Sister- an initiated member of an organization paired with an uninitiated member to help them through the member education period. Often referred to as a 'Big'.

Candidates- a term used by some NPHC organizations to refer to members that have submitted their application packet and been approved to go through the intake process.

Crossed-the date of initiation into an NPHC organization and some MGC organizations.

Chapter- the smallest self-supporting unit of a Greek organization. Chapters may be part of a national organization, or may exist on their own. see also national, local.

Colony- a group petitioning to form a new chapter.

Continuous Open Bidding (COB)- A process in which a woman can be offered a bid after the formal recruitment process.

Dry- alcohol-free.

Formal recruitment- a period of time during which chapters select their new members through a formal process.

Fraternity- a Greek letter organization, which may admit men, women, or both. Although many people use 'fraternity' to refer exclusively to men's groups, many women's groups officially call themselves fraternities, and the most proper term for them is Women's Fraternities.

Hazing- mental or physical harm done to a new member of an organization. Hazing is against university policy and Texas law.

House- the physical structure that some chapters utilize as a facility. An older term sometimes used in place of the word chapter. Chapter is more appropriate for the organization.

Inactive- an undergraduate member of a chapter not currently participating. see also active

Informal- event used by MGC organizations to introduce new initiated members to the campus community.

Informal recruitment- a continuous, open recruitment period with no specific activities of rushing and pledging.

Intake- Name for the process by which interested person become members of most Black Greek-lettered organizations.

Interfraternity Council- the governing council for men's fraternities.

Line-The members of a NPHC new member class.

Local- An organization that is not part of an incorporated Greek organization. SMU does not have any local chapters.

Multicultural Greek Council- the governing council for Asian, Latina/Latino, and Multi-Cultural organizations, for both men and women.

National/international- a Greek organization with many chapters, which have a single governing body. Chapters belonging to national organizations generally have chapter letters, as well as national letters- for instance, SMU is home to the Beta Lambda chapter of Kappa Alpha Order.

National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO)- the governing body of Latino/Latina member organizations.

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC)- the governing body of the 26 member organizations and of Panhellenic Associations and Councils on college campuses.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)- the governing council for historically African-American organizations, for both men and women – name can be used for the national umbrella organization and the local council.

Neophyte- the new member of an NPHC organization that has just been initiated. See prophyte.

New member/Associate- someone who has accepted a bid to join a Greek organization, but has not yet been initiated.

New member period- the time between the acceptance of a bid and initiation. Chapters generally take this time to educate their new members in the organization's history and traditions. Pledging is an older term still in use by some organizations.

North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC)- the governing body of up to 65 member organizations and of Interfraternity Councils on college campuses. Some member organizations are also members of NPHC and NALFO.

Panhellenic Council- the governing council for NPC sororities.

Pledge- an older term for new member.

Potential New Member- A college woman who participates in recruitment.

Probate- Official public display of initiation in the form of a step, typically performed by NPHC organizations.

Prophyte- a neophyte becomes a prophyte when he/she has participated in the initiation of new members.

Ritual- the sacred ceremonies practiced by every chapter of a Greek letter organization. Generally secret.

Recruitment- a series of events offering members and potential members the opportunity to get to know each other.

Roster- the list of members in a chapter, typically the list maintained by the university but can also refer to the list maintained by the chapter or inter/national organization.

Rush- an older term for recruitment that is no longer used. Replaced with Recruitment.

Soror- a fellow member of an NPHC sorority.

Sorority- a Greek letter organization, which admits only women. The term did not come into common use until later in the 20th century. See also Fraternity.

Underground- a student that participates with the chapter as a member but has not been eligible to join or on the roster.