

UNION

COLLEGE

**Student Handbook
Fraternity and Sorority Policies**

2025-2026

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FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE POLICIES

Introduction

Fraternity and Sorority life at Union College is part of a long history dating back to 1825 and has proved to be an invaluable part of the campus community. As the home of six founding fraternities and the “Union Triad,” we are recognized as the “Mother of Fraternities.” The fraternity and sorority life community at Union comprises the Interfraternity Council, the College Panhellenic Council, the Multicultural Greek Council, and our service-based organization.

The rules and procedures outlined herein have been established by the College to promote a safe, healthy, and productive fraternity and sorority experience for all students involved. Fraternities and sororities must adhere to all rules and procedures that appear in this section, in addition to those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct, Student Handbook, and Residential Policies.

Definitions (Fraternity & Sorority Life Terminology)

- Active: A fully initiated member of the chapter.
- Bid: A formal invitation to join a fraternity or sorority. Although a student may receive several bids, they may only accept a bid from (and join) one social organization. Students can be members of the service-based fraternity and a social organization.
- Chapter: The local group of a Greek organization on campus.
- College Panhellenic Council (CPC): College-advised council representing the three sororities under the umbrella of the National Panhellenic Council currently present on the Union campus. The Council is governed by the rules of both the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) and Union College.
- Community Service: Coordinated hands-on engagement volunteer work/labor in the community, often done in conjunction with an agency or special cause.
- Greek Event: Any event or activity that is sponsored, endorsed, organized, or hosted by a fraternity and/or sorority, or that a reasonable observer would associate with a fraternity or sorority. This also includes events or activities communicated by word of mouth or unofficial advertisement and includes events and activities on College property, non-College owned off-campus properties, or at any other venue. The following bullets are meant to offer some examples and are not intended as the only way an event or activity can be considered a Greek Event:
 - The chapter pays for any part of the event or activity through the chapter account or collection of funds from individual members.
 - The event or activity is advertised by or associated with the chapter in any way (flyers, handouts, announcement at chapter meetings, email list serve distributions, group messaging).
 - Attendance of the members (regardless of how many there are) present at the event or activity is based upon their affiliation rather than their individual initiative (i.e., it is more likely they attended because of their affiliation).

- Initiation: The ritual or process which brings a new member into full membership.
- Interest Meeting or Informational Meeting: Meeting held by Multicultural Greek Council fraternities and sororities to dispense information about the membership intake process (applications, fees, due dates etc.) and recruit new members
- Interfraternity Council (IFC): College-advised council representing the fraternities who are under the umbrella of the North American Interfraternity Council currently present on the Union campus. This council is governed by both the rules of the North American Interfraternity Council (NIC) and Union College.
- Multicultural Greek Council (MGC): College-advised council representing both culturally based fraternities and sororities under the umbrellas of multiple governing national councils
- New Member: A currently enrolled student that meets all College requirements for membership in a Greek organization, has received (and accepted) a bid or invitation for membership, and is working towards initiation/full membership
- New Member Presentation (Probate/Surfacing): Traditional revealing of newly initiated members in Multicultural Greek Council fraternities and sororities.
- Philanthropy: An event or project designed to raise funds for a community non-profit or charitable cause.
- Potential New Member (PNM): A currently enrolled student that is being recruited to join a fraternity or sorority but has not yet accepted a bid or invitation for membership.
- Recruitment: A period during which fraternities and sororities seek out and engage interested students by demonstrating what each organization offers its members. This is also the period where the Interfraternity Council and College Panhellenic Council will offer bids to potential new members.

Fraternity/Sorority Recognition

Defined as the formal process by which Union College agrees that a fraternity or sorority may function on the campus, enroll members from the undergraduate body through recruitment/intake activities, and identify its chapter with the College. For the purpose of this recognition policy, the terms “fraternity” and “sorority” are used to designate a collegiate Greek-letter organization. The organizations reviewed for recognition under this policy have all the following characteristics:

- They are entitled to single-sex membership under the provisions of regulations promulgated under Title IX of the U.S. Education Act Amendments of 1972.
- They are entitled to be subjectively selective in their membership within the limits stated under regulations promulgated under Title IX of the U.S. Education Act Amendments of 1972 and College policy.
- They are legal corporations external to the College. In all cases, their chapter corporations, alumni corporations, and inter/national Greek organizations are incorporated separately from the College.

***Note: The College is not legally responsible or liable for the acts of those organizations.*

Rationale for Recognition Policy

The Recognition Policy enables the College to maintain a record of Greek organizations. This record facilitates communication between the College and the Greek organizations and their members and permits the College

to readily identify those Greek organizations which are entitled to the benefits of recognition. The policy is further supported by the following assumptions and expectations:

- Fraternities and Sororities are an integral part of the educational environment at Union and are expected to support the mission and educational values of Union College.
- All national and international fraternities and sororities are required by their parent organizations to be recognized by the College in order to operate a chapter at the College.
- Mutual responsibility is needed between the College and the fraternities and sororities. Fraternities and sororities, by way of recognition, are accountable to the College.

Recognition Policy

This policy constitutes Union's procedure for conferring recognition of social fraternities and sororities. If there becomes the need, this policy will govern that process. There are three levels of recognition available to fraternities and sororities at Union College—Provisional, Full, and Probationary (see Maintaining Recognition section). Listed below are descriptions and conditions of each level of recognition.

Provisional Recognition

Provisional recognition is given to new and/or returning organizations that seek to become fully recognized fraternities/sororities at Union College by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee and the applicable governing council. Provisional recognition, once given, is effective for a period of one (1) calendar year, defined as twelve (12) months from the date of recognition. If, at the end of that year, an organization has not met the criteria to become a fully recognized Greek organization, a decision will be made by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee, in consultation with the respective governing council, to extend provisional recognition or rescind recognition altogether.

In order to request Provisional Recognition, an organization must fill out a Provisional Recognition Request application (including the information listed below) and file it with the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee. A request for Provisional Recognition by a group submitting an incomplete application will not be considered until such time as the application is complete.

The following information must be supplied either within or attached to the Provisional Recognition Application:

- A petition for provisional recognition signed by at least seven interested undergraduate students who have obtained sophomore academic standing at Union College.
- All membership must consist of undergraduate Union College students only.
- A demonstrated alumni or National office support from which active and involved advisors will be able to be drawn (who shall not be members of the College community).
- An inter/national organization who has declared, in writing, an interest in affiliating with and supporting the group of students seeking membership.
- The inter/national organization must be affiliated and in good standing with an umbrella organization such as the North American Interfraternity Council (NIC), National Panhellenic Council (NPC) or Multicultural Greek Council (MGC). Members of MGC may include the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) and National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO)
- Relevant information (as stated in application).
- A statement of purpose/principles.
- Organization goals/standards.

- Bylaws and constitution.
- An Inter/National Risk Management Policy.
- An acceptable set of rules of conduct by the inter/national organization.
- A detailed chapter development plan. This plan will include:
 - Proposed new member education plans,
 - Organization advertisement and publicity plans,
 - Recruitment dates,
 - Recruitment methods - including a strategy for current calendar year, 3 year plan, and 5 year plan from provisional recognition submission date
 - Inter/national and local advisor involvement,
 - Any conferences, leadership opportunities, community service, or campus activities that are planned.

Documentation of support from the appropriate campus governing council (i.e. IFC, NPC or MGC) must also be submitted. If, at the current time, an appropriate governing council does not exist and all other conditions have been met, the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee and the students interested in joining the group will meet to discuss alternatives.

Once granted provisional recognition, the following conditions must be met throughout the provisional period for a group to be considered for full recognition:

- Regular meetings with the appropriate fraternity/sorority advisor (i.e. Panhellenic Advisor, IFC Advisor, etc.).
- A demonstrated ability to recruit and sustain membership on campus.
- A minimum of ten undergraduate Union College students who have reached sophomore status.
- Compliance with all College policies and procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook and with all inter/national rules and regulations, along with all local, state, and federal laws.
- Campus/community involvement including, but not limited to, educational programming, community service, and philanthropy events.
- Active participation in, support from, and operation within the guidelines of the appropriate council, if applicable.
- Uninterrupted and on-going affiliation and involvement with the inter/national organization.
- Each group seeking recognition at Union will be treated on an individual basis

The list above is not exhaustive and additional conditions may be added from time to time. Reasonable effort will be made to provide advance notice of additional conditions.

While on provisional recognition, an organization may:

- Reserve rooms for meetings through the appropriate fraternity/sorority advisor (i.e. Panhellenic Advisor, IFC Advisor).
- Advertise the organization in accordance with College policy.
- Recruit members within set guidelines and College policy.
- Co-sponsor campus events and programs with a fully recognized organization/club or campus department.
- Participate in the educational, social, and athletic program and activities of the College which are provided for fraternal organizations.
- Have voting rights on the appropriate governing council (but members cannot hold officer positions).
- Identify the chapter with Union and use the College's name along with, but not in place of, identification of the sponsoring body.

Full Recognition

Full recognition is conferred upon a fraternity/sorority that:

- I. meets the standards and criteria set forth by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee throughout its provisional recognition period; and
- II. files a completed application for such recognition with the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee before the expiration of the provisional period.
- III. Has paid the necessary inter/national charter fees associated with extension

This application requires:

- An updated statement of purpose/principles.
- Organization goals/standards.
- Bylaws and constitution.
- A current membership roster.
- An officer listing.
- An activities report that includes all campus and community involvement through the provisional recognition period.
- A contact list of local advisors.
- Comprehensive liability insurance (minimum of \$1,000,000)

The Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee will make the final determination of whether full recognition is given to the organization based on the above-required information and whether the provisional recognition requirements and conditions were met.

Benefits of Full Recognition

- Chapters are granted the ability to apply for on-campus congregate housing through the Office of Residential Education & Housing.
- Access to and use of College facilities for official functions.
- Ability to co-sponsor campus events and programs with organizations with Provisional Recognition.
- Ability to hold an officer position within the appropriate governing body.
- Ability for inclusion as a Recognized Organization in published College materials (i.e. College website, "All About U", Garnet Yearbook, etc.)
- Ability to advertise the organization in accordance with College policy.
- Ability to recruit members within set guidelines.

Maintaining Recognition

Full Recognition will be maintained by chapters remaining in "good standing" as evaluated by being in compliance with the Code of Student Conduct and the additional criteria and standards established by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee in this section. Should it be determined that a chapter is not in good standing, their recognition can be revoked or they can be put on Probationary Recognition for a period of time not to exceed one calendar year.

If a chapter is alleged to have violated the Code of Student Conduct, the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee may halt all activities of the chapter until the conduct process is complete. It is possible that a chapter will lose all recognition as a result of the conduct process, at which point it will cease to exist at Union College either permanently or for a determined period of time.

Loss of Recognition/Probationary Recognition

Aside from incidents involving adjudication of conduct, a chapter can be deactivated or the chapter can be put on Probationary Recognition for various reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- If the membership numbers fall below the minimum of seven undergraduate students and/or failure to recruit for two academic years consecutively
- If a chapter is found to be recruiting from a population other than Union College undergraduate students of at least sophomore academic status. This applies to social greek organizations and not service based fraternities.
- Not complying with College rules, regulations, and policies.
- Not complying with the terms of all contractual agreements with the College.
- Failure to update and maintain required documentation with the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee, including officer contact information.
- Failure to maintain membership rosters.
- Failure to submit lists of potential new members and have their qualifications verified prior to offering bids/invitations for membership.
- Failure to maintain insurance/submit an up to date certificate of insurance.
- Not maintaining the constitution and bylaws.
- Not maintaining detailed chapter development plans.
- Not active in the appropriate governing council.
- Failure to pay necessary dues/bills to College or Council
- Failure to maintain positive and proactive campus/community involvement including, but not limited to, educational programming, community service, and philanthropy events.
- Failure to comply with the Rules of Public Order, adopted by the Union College Board of Trustees.
- Failure to comply with generally accepted standards of neighborliness, including exterior neatness of the premises, the avoidance of unreasonable noise levels, and compliance with related local laws.
- For fraternities and sororities occupying College owned facilities, failure to maintain premises in conditions satisfactory to the College and in compliance with Office of Residential Education & Housing regulations.
- For fraternities and sororities occupying facilities not owned by the College, (a) failure to have certification to the College that there exists a house association (which shall sign such certification) which has assumed full responsibility for the physical condition of the facility and compliance with all applicable local codes, regulations, and standards, and/or (b) failure of an officer of the house association and the chapter president to certify that an annual safety inspection has been performed by an organization or person satisfactory to the College and that all violations have been corrected or are in the process of being corrected. Local authorities having jurisdiction include, but are not limited to, the Schenectady Fire Department and Building Inspector.

Probationary Recognition will last for a period of time not to exceed one calendar year. At the end of the prescribed Probationary Recognition Period, the decision will be made by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee to extend probation, to revoke all recognition, or to grant the chapter Full Recognition status. A chapter that has been placed on Probationary Recognition will have to meet all the criteria listed

above for chapters seeking Full Recognition in addition to any sanctions in order to be considered for Full Recognition.

Use of College Name and Logos

Recognized fraternities and sororities enjoy benefits and privileges associated with their affiliation with Union College. It is understood that fraternities and sororities shall not use the name of the College for any purpose other than chapter identification. Any further use of the College's name, or any College logo, trademark or service mark shall require the prior approval of the Vice President for Communications and Marketing or designee. In no event shall any fraternity or sorority use the College's name or tax identification number or hold itself out in such manner as to suggest that it is synonymous with, or authorized to act on behalf of, Union College or that its actions are in any way approved, sponsored, or endorsed by Union College without prior approval. Violations of these prohibitions may result in deactivation of the chapter.

Insurance Requirements

All organizations, regardless of recognition level, must maintain comprehensive general liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00 (one million dollars) of primary liability coverage (each occurrence) with general aggregate coverage of at least \$2,000,000.00 (total), or such other amounts as the College may require (it being understood that the College will only increase these requirements upon not less than six months' prior written notice to organizations). Such liability insurance shall be acceptable in form and content to the College, shall include "The Trustees of Union College in the Town of Schenectady in the State of New York a/k/a Union College", its trustees, officers, employees and agents, as additional insureds, and shall be written with an insurance carrier acceptable to the College. The insurance shall be considered primary over any and all collectable insurance that the College may have available. A certificate of such insurance shall be forwarded to the College as evidence of such coverage, and the College must receive notice of any change, cancellation, or renewal of the policy. In the event of any cancellation or nonrenewal of coverage, or any change in the policy contrary to the requirements of this paragraph, the College may immediately suspend organizational operations until the deficiency is remedied and/or commence disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

Chapter Management Guidelines

Conflicts between Union and Organizational Policies

Those students who also happen to be members of fraternities and sororities are accountable at several levels: Union College, the local chapter, the governing council and the inter/national organization. However, Union is not responsible for deciding matters of pure organizational policy, which means any concerns members have regarding decisions made by their chapter or inter/national headquarters that do not implicate College policy must be resolved through organizational channels. Union College will intervene only when there is a breach of Union College policy.

Basic Chapter Operational Requirements:

If a chapter currently occupies a College owned facility and wishes to keep this space, they must:

- Maintain 92% occupancy rate for the house (determined by the College, will vary based on location).
- Abstain from vandalism, or neglect or misuse of the building.

Recruitment

Recruitment occurs each term as set by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or governing council. In order to participate, students must have achieved sophomore academic standing (9 or more credit hours) and have a minimum 2.50 cumulative GPA. Dry recruitment is defined as any period of time organized by the organization for the recruitment of potential new members and must be completely alcohol free.

Alcohol may not be present in any form during recruitment events, even if it is not being served to potential new members. This is in effect for the entire recruitment period.

The laws of the State of New York regarding the legal drinking age and the use and distribution of alcohol must also be followed at any event outside of recruitment and/or education activities.

Membership Policy

Beginning with the Class of 2005, the College instituted a "Sophomore Recruitment" process for all social Greek letter organizations. Simply stated, students may not apply for membership in social fraternities and sororities until they have obtained sophomore academic standing. First-year students are prohibited from participating in any social fraternity/sorority Recruitment or Membership Intake activities organized or sponsored by any College recognized social Greek Organizations as defined above, and/or by the respective governing councils' guidelines. Social Fraternities and Sororities are also prohibited from extending bids and/or membership invitations to any student who has not obtained sophomore academic status. Failure to abide by this policy may result in sanctions on the chapter, up to and including deactivation.

Extension for NPC Women's Sororities (in addition to College policies)

When all NPC chapters are over or close to total, or a need arises as determined by the Panhellenic Advisor and the Panhellenic Council, consideration will be given to adding another chapter. Such a chapter shall be organized through colonization by an NPC organization. NPC guidelines should be followed when establishing a new chapter. The College reserves the right to override an NPC rule, which is in conflict with a decision made by Union College officials. All new chapters seeking recognition must provide proof of insurance to the Office of Residential Education & Housing or designee prior to colonization.

All expansion activities, including colonization and subsequent conferral of recognition, must be approved by the Office of Residential Education & Housing.

Pre-Clearance of New Member Education Activities

All new member education programs of Greek organizations must be approved in advance by the Office of Residential Education & Housing. In deciding whether to approve the program, the Office of Residential Education & Housing will consider whether the proposed activity constitutes hazing as defined above and also whether the activity is likely to produce or would be perceived by a reasonable person as likely to produce mental or physical discomfort, stress, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Greek organizations may not engage in any new member education or other activities that have not been approved by the Office of Residential Education & Housing.

New Member Education

Additional principles applicable to Greek organization new member education programs and activities include the following:

- The New Member Education process at Union College is 100% dry (alcohol free).
- All chapters must submit a calendar of events outlining the date, time, and location of each new member education activity by the end of the recruitment period.
- The Office of Residential Education & Housing determines what constitutes a new member activity as opposed to a chapter event.
- In the case of organizations governed by the Multicultural Greek Council, the calendar must be submitted before invitations for membership are extended.
- All new member education events must end by midnight.
- No more than three hours per night may be used for new member events.
- No new member activities may occur between midnight and 7 a.m.
- Sleepovers and lock-ins are prohibited.
- All new member education events must occur on campus unless approved by the Office of Residential Education & Housing.
- Initiation must be completed by the start of week 10.

Risk Management Guidelines

Safety and Security Walk-Throughs

College personnel may conduct unscheduled and unannounced walk-throughs, except during pre-approved initiation ritual activities or other requested times as approved by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or other campus officials. These walk-throughs will cover common spaces in Union College residential buildings, including residence halls, Minerva Houses, and fraternities and sororities. Private rooms will not be subject to walkthroughs, consistent with current practice, but College personnel may enter private rooms during such walkthroughs if they have a reasonable basis to suspect a violation of College policy or applicable law.

Prohibited Activities

The following activities and behaviors are prohibited. They are considered extremely high risk activities and can result in significant personal injury, danger to oneself or others, property damage, and civil and/or criminal

liability. Without limiting consequences for other violations of College policy, failure to abide by these prohibitions will result in the sanctioning of the chapter, up to and including deactivation.

- The use of materials likely to damage College facilities or create a need for unusual/excessive cleaning, such as paint, sand, water, foam etc.
- Any use of human performers/dancers (exotic dancers, strippers, go-go dancers) and/or props (cages and poles) that encourage or promote this activity in fraternity and sorority houses.

Please note that these prohibited acts are in addition to prohibited conduct detailed in the Code of Student Conduct and other College policies.

Fraternities & First-Year Students

In order to help facilitate a healthy and safe introduction to the academic year, the Fraternity and Sorority community has adopted a standard social events practice for the start of the each term of each academic year. Specifically:

- Weeks 1 and 2: Fraternities and sororities will not host social events with alcohol on campus. All on-campus houses will be dry. This period coincides with the College-established recruitment window and guidelines (See “Dry Recruitment.”). In addition, no open social events with alcohol should take place at off campus residences where first year students are present.
- Weeks 3 through 9: Fraternities and sororities may host registered social events with alcohol under the following guidelines:
 - Mixers/Invite-only - Fraternities and sororities may host either a mixer (meaning an event between members of fraternities and/or sororities) or an invite-only event. In both cases, a “guest list” must be submitted along with the event registration.
 - Open event - Following the conclusion of the mixer/invite only event, fraternities and sororities may open their registered social events to additional campus community members.
- Week 10/Finals Week: Fraternities and sororities will not host social events with alcohol, both on or off campus.

Fraternity/Sorority Social Events with Alcohol

In addition to the requirements set forth under the Social Events with Alcohol Policy, for all Greek Social Events with Alcohol, the Greek organization must comply with the North American Interfraternity Conference’s Alcohol & Drug Guidelines (NIC) Risk Management Policy. If the NIC requirements are more stringent than the College requirements, the NIC requirements shall be followed. You can download a copy of the NIC Guidelines [here](#).