

## Greek Glossary

**Abroad:** A member who is not physically present due to educational, military, philanthropic, religious, occupational, or family reasons.

**Ace:** The first person of a line.

**Active:** A dues-paying member of a fraternity or sorority who plays an active role in the organization; also known as a member.

**Advisor:** Commonly an alumnus or alumna member who serves as a resource for the active chapter and liaison between the alumni and the undergraduates. Advisors may also have faculty standing within the university and may not necessarily be an initiated member of the chapter.

**Affiliate:** An individual initiated within the Greek community.

**Alumna:** A member of a sorority who has graduated from college, and is no longer an active member.  
Plural: Alumnae.

**Alumnus:** A member of a fraternity who has graduated from college, and is no longer an active member.  
Plural: Alumni.

**Anchor:** The last person of the line.

**Annex:** An actively involved undergraduate member who is currently enrolled at an institution different from where he or she was initiated/crossed. Also known as a “transfer.”

**Bid:** A formal invitation to join the membership of a fraternity or sorority.

**Big Brother/Sister:** An active member of a fraternity or sorority who serves as a mentor to a new member throughout their new membership education process leading up to initiation.

**Brother:** An initiated member of a fraternity commonly used by fraternity members to refer to each other, or a “Brotherhood.”

**Call/Chant:** A vocal sound used by members of culturally based Greek organizations to acknowledge other members.

**Captain:** the designated leader of a “line” or “class” chosen by new members, not necessarily the Ace.

**Chapter:** The local campus membership and organization of a larger national organization.

**Charter:** (n) A formal document acknowledging the establishment of an official chapter, usually issued from an organization's headquarters. (v) The process of establishing a new chapter of a fraternity or sorority at a new institution.

**Charter Class:** The group of individuals that establish a new Greek chapter is its Charter Class, also known as the Founding Class.

**Council:** A governing body of Greek fraternities and sororities usually comprised of chapter representatives. Councils often oversee programming, recruitment, and conduct of their respective chapters.

**Crest:** Insignia used by fraternity or sorority members. Most Greek organizations reserve the crest for initiated members only. Each crest has hidden, secret meanings behind it. Also known as a coat of arms or shield.

**Crossing:** The date on which an new member crossed into a fraternity or sorority to become an active member. Usually a term used in culturally centered Greek organizations.

**Deferred Recruitment:** Recruitment which starts after the beginning of the school year.

**De-Pledge (DP):** Ending one's affiliation with a fraternity or sorority before initiation, also known as dropping. Also known as "dropped pledge."

**Divine Nine (D9):** A nickname for the nine historically African American Greek organizations on the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

**Dry:** Alcohol not permitted.

**Dues:** The monetary obligation associated with membership in a fraternity or sorority. These fees are used for operation of the chapter and vary from chapter to chapter.

**Exchange:** An informal function (usually a dance, dinner, or a party) held between men's and women's groups.

**Founder(s):** A person or persons created a specific a fraternity or sorority; also referred to as a Charter member.

**Founder(s) Day:** A day recognized by fraternities and sororities meant to celebrate the founding of their organization.

**Formal Recruitment:** A specified period of time set aside by a governing Greek council in which fraternities and sororities may recruit potential new members. Formal Recruitment periods have strict guidelines for handing out bids and interacting with potential new members.

**Fraternity:** A name traditionally used to describe a men's Greek letter organization.

**Greeks:** Members of fraternities or sororities who use Greek symbols or names.

**Greek Week:** A specific week set aside each year for Greek organizations to participate in community wide events, philanthropies, social activities, and competitions.

**Handshake:** A special handshake unique to each organization. Only initiated members will know the handshake. Also known as a “grip.”

**Hazing:** Any act performed by a member of any organization that is likely to cause harm, danger, embarrassment, shame, and loss of human dignity. Hazing is illegal.

**House:** A physical residence of a specific fraternity or sorority. It is sometimes used as a synonym for “chapter.”

**Housing Corporation:** The entity that holds the title to property that a chapter lives or meets in. This is usually an alumni group like an advisory board.

**Independent (GDI):** A person who is not a member of a fraternity or sorority. Commonly referred to as GDIs (God Damn Independents).

**Initiation:** The final ceremony before a new member (pledge) becomes an active member of a fraternity or sorority.

**Installations:** A formal end of the year banquet in which the new cabinet and Just Initiated (JI) are sworn into the house. Also can be referred to as “Installs.”

**Intake:** A process of recruitment to choose potential new members traditionally used by culturally centered Greek organizations.

**Interfraternity Council (IFC):** The local chapter of the North-American Interfraternity Conference, which acts as a governing body of nationally-recognized traditional fraternities.

**Interest Group:** A group of individuals on campus in the first stage of the process of chartering as a chapter of a Greek-letter organization.

**ISM (I See Me):** A reference to a member in a different fraternity or sorority chapter that has the same line number. Also known as “Number Twin.”

**Just Initiated (JI)/Junior Active (JA):** A member of a fraternity or sorority who has not been formally installed.

**Lambda:** A brother of the fraternity. “Lambdas” is commonly used by brothers in reference to their organization.

**Lavaliere:** A necklace with Greek letters on it.

**Legacy:** The son, grandson, brother of a previous member of a fraternity; the daughter, granddaughter, sister of a previous member of a sorority.

**Line:** Term used to describe a group of fraternity or sorority members who were initiated together, commonly used as line brothers or line sisters. Also referred to as a “ship.”

**Local:** An organization that is not part of an incorporated Greek organization, typically only found on one campus.

**Member:** A student who has been initiated into a fraternity or sorority.

**Motto:** A short phrase that describes the purpose or outlook of a fraternity or sorority and is available for all to read.

**National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO):** An umbrella council for Latino fraternities and sororities.

**National APIDA Panhellenic Association (NAPA):** A national association of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American collegiate fraternities and sororities.

**National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC):** The governing council of multicultural fraternities and sororities.

**National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC):** The national governing body of nine historically African-American fraternities and sororities, commonly known as the “Divine Nine.”

**National Panhellenic Conference (NPC):** The governing body for national and international mainstream sororities.

**Neophyte (Neo):** A member of the last line to cross in the local chapter of a NPHC or cultural-based organization.

**North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC):** A federation of men’s national and international fraternities.

**New Member (Pledge):** A trial member, working to become an active member.

**New Member Educator:** The officer who prepares potential new members (pledges) for initiation, and oversees their education in the chapter’s traditions, history, and ritual. Also known as a “Pledge Dad.”

**New Member Education Process:** The educational period prior to initiation in which new members (pledges) learn about the given organization.

**Open Recruitment:** The unstructured recruitment process, outside of Formal Recruitment, in which fraternities and sororities recruit new members throughout the academic year.

**Order of Omega:** An honor society for Greek members who demonstrate outstanding leadership and academic achievement.

**Paddle:** A decorative gift symbolic of initiation and tradition.

**Para (Paraphernalia):** The different items of Greek clothing or items someone is wearing.

**Perp (Perpetrator):** Someone who pretends to be a member of a fraternity or sorority by wearing the letters.

**Philanthropy:** Chapter-sponsored service project from which donations of money, goods, and other items are given to charitable organizations.

**Pin:** The active pin is worn on the chest designating an initiated member of a certain chapter. A new member pin is similar and is used to designate a new member of a chapter.

**Pledging:** See “New Member Education Process.”

**Pledge Brother:** Term used by a new member, active or alumnus in reference to a fellow brother who was part of the same pledge class and period. Often abbreviated as “pledge bro” or “pbro.” Also referred to as “line brother.”

**Pledge Class:** The group of new members that pledge to join a fraternity at the same time.

**Pledge Period (Pledgeship):** The period during which one is a pledge.

**Probate:** Official public display of initiation that typically involve a formalized set of greetings, spoken history, unveiling of a new line, and performances. Sometimes referred to as a “New Member Presentation.”

**Prophyte:** A neophyte becomes a prophyte when he/she has been fully initiated.

**Quota:** A specified number of bids to give out during a formal recruitment period.

**Recharter:** Process where a fraternity or a sorority that was previously on campus receives another charter for the same campus. May happen when a chapter died out due to low numbers, or had their charter revoked.

**Recruitment:** A period of time and process in which Greek organizations seek out potential new members to join their chapter.

**Registered Student Organization (RSO):** A self-governing student organization that contributes to the educational, social, recreational, and personal development of its students.

**Ritual:** The traditions and secretive ceremonies of a specific fraternity or sorority.

**Rush:** See "Recruitment."

**Rushee:** A student participating in recruitment who visits Greek organizations with an interest in possibly affiliating with one organization as a potential new member (pledge).

**Sign:** A unique display expressed by hand symbols.

**Sister:** An initiated member of a sorority.

**Sorority:** A Greek organization whose membership consists of women. Some sororities are identified as a fraternity in their official and traditional name, but are still known as sororities.

**Step:** A form of percussive dance in which the entire body is used as an instrument to produce complex rhythms and sounds. The tradition of stepping is rooted within historically African American fraternities and sororities.

**Stroll:** A line dance done by members of culturally-based Greek organizations; usually done at a party or step show. Also referred to as "Party Walk," or "Party Hop."

**SYANDS (Same Year and Semester):** Individuals who were initiated/crossed in the same year and semester. Commonly used by sorority and fraternity members to reference their counterparts. Pronounced "sands."

**Tiki:** A large necklace worn with large Greek letters on them. Similar to a lavalier but much larger and often made out of wood.

**Underground:** Non-sanctioned activity by a chapter. Students who initiated/crossed underground are not recognized by the fraternity or sorority.

**Yard:** A term used by NPHC groups to indicate the campus.