

Dear Parents and Family Members of our future Greek Life community,

Welcome to Greek Life at the University of West Florida!

Your student has embarked upon a great adventure by choosing to attend the University of West Florida. Your student has many opportunities ahead of him or her while at UWF. By joining a fraternity or sorority, he or she is joining many other new members in their search for a sense of community at the University. Students can feel overwhelmed once they are in a new environment. We in the Greek Affairs Office hope to help your student through this new and exciting time in their lives.

For many parents, the Greek community conjures up images of Animal House. That is simply not the reality. There are many myths about the Greek community, but the reality is that men and women in fraternities and sororities are committed to their academics, volunteer time in the community, develop and strengthen their leadership skills, and form a campus network with other Greeks.

Parents Often Ask . . .

How will my student benefit from joining a sorority or a fraternity?

Sororities and fraternities have a history on campus dating back to the school's founding. These organizations are rooted in founding principles that foster academic achievement, student involvement, community service, and life-long friendships. Greek organizations are groups of men and women who come together to form a personal network of individuals with similar ideas, interests, and a mutual pursuit of a well-rounded college education. Advantages include:

- A support group to help make the adjustment to college easier.
- Scholastic resources to help students achieve their academic goals.
- Leadership skills acquired through hands-on experience.
- Encouragement to get involved and maximize their potential on campus.
- Opportunities for active participation in community service projects.

How will joining a Greek organization affect my student's academic pursuits?

Sororities and fraternities serve as a great resource for students academically through study hours and tutoring programs. Most chapters require a high GPA for initial membership into the organization; the minimum GPA to participate in sorority recruitment is a 2.5 and fraternity rush is 2.3, per National Standards.

What are the social aspects of fraternity or sorority membership?

Because the Greek community at the University of West Florida contributes to the social activity on campus, it has taken great strides toward creating a responsible and safe environment for its members. All fraternities and sororities have risk management programs dictated by the National Organizations. The organizations work closely with the Greek Affairs staff and security to conduct safe social activities. All Greek organizations are held accountable to the University of West Florida Alcohol Policy and Florida State Law.

What is the financial obligation?

Like any opportunity for involvement in college, there is a financial commitment associated with joining a fraternity or sorority. The costs go toward International fees, chapter operating expenses and social functions. Financial obligations differ for men and women and among individual chapters. New members can expect to pay higher dues their first semester. Dues range from \$300.00-\$600.00 per semester. Additional costs throughout the semester will go to meals, formals, trips, pictures, gifts, social events, T-shirts, etc. In addition, the dues go towards the organizations insurance policies. While your son or daughter is participating in the recruitment process, make sure that he or she asks about the financial obligations of membership.

Is hazing a part of the Greek culture at the University of West Florida?

The University of West Florida has a zero-tolerance policy regarding hazing that is consistent with Florida state law. Hazing includes any activity that subjects members to harassment, ridicule, intimidation, physical exhaustion, abuse, or mental distress. Hazing is contrary to the purposes of the Greek community and the University. Hazing is not tolerated. If you sense your student may be participating in inappropriate activities as a result of membership in a fraternity or sorority, you should contact the Office of Greek Affairs. Calls will be handled in a discreet manner.

Who is actually in charge of the fraternities and sororities?

Individual chapters elect officers to manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. These officers are assisted by alumni who act as advisors. Each chapter is also responsible to their International organization, which offers support, advice, and direction through paid professional staff and regional volunteers. At UWF, one Greek Advisor and one Greek Affairs Graduate Assistant are on staff and serve as the primary contacts for the Greek community.

Rush/Recruitment/Intake

Formal recruitment, often times call "Rush," is held at the beginning of the fall semester each year. This means that entering freshmen and all other UWF non-Greek affiliated students are allowed to apply for the rush and recruitment processes. Throughout the formal process, the potential members will get to know the Greek members through structured events, parties and ceremonies. Please check the individual fraternity and sorority web pages for event schedules and details. The Membership Intake process to join an NPHC organization happens at various times during the year at the discretion of each group. It is heavily encouraged that students do extensive research into the NPHC organizations by visiting their web sites and reading historical documents about each group.

What is my role as a parent?

Encourage your son or daughter to attend as many campus events as possible during UWF's Welcome Week events and the beginning of school. Being involved is the best way to meet the active Greek members and learn about their chapters. Involvement and interest in other student organizations is looked favorably upon during the membership selection process.

Students need support throughout the process of recruitment/intake and new member education. Be supportive and learn as much as you can about Greek life by asking questions of your student as he or she meets members in fraternities and sororities. Keep an open mind . . .

Greek life is not for everyone. Just because you may have been a fraternity or sorority member doesn't mean that it is the right choice for your son or daughter.

Fraternalities and sororities are different on every campus. Groups that may have been strong on the campus where you attended school may not have the same reputation at the University of West Florida. Let your son or daughter choose the group that he or she feels the most comfortable joining.

Talk to your student beforehand about the financial obligation. Determine who will pay for what and where the limits are. Know that the system of fraternity/sorority recruitment at UWF is a mutual selection process. Not everyone who wants to be Greek will receive a bid, but the Office of Greek Affairs will do everything possible to make sure the potential new members understand the process and possible outcomes.

Do not become too involved in the sorority and fraternity recruitment/intake process . . . this is your son or daughter's decision. Too often, parents do not allow their students to "fight their own battles." It helps the student mature and gain some assertiveness when allowed to call various offices if they have questions or concerns about their decision to go Greek. Keep the Office of Greek Affairs contact information on hand if you have any questions or concerns about Greek Life on UWF's campus. 850-474-2389 / greekaff@uwf.edu.