

Fraternity and Sorority Life: A Great Opportunity for Growth, Support, and Engagement!



Parents and families are often concerned about their son or daughter's transition from high school to college. Fraternities and sororities can facilitate a smooth shift from high school to college or for transfer students by providing members with a personalized college experience that offers scholastic support, hands-on leadership experiences, opportunities to serve the community, and close, compassionate friendships. Many are not familiar with what it means to join a fraternity or sorority, or to be "Greek." To help you begin to navigate those waters, we want to reach out and help you understand fraternity and sorority life, things to keep in mind, and things to look for.

Many families wonder how students can join a fraternity or sorority. Each semester students are offered a variety of opportunities to learn about and join Greek-letter organizations. The membership selection processes occur each semester, although some organizations only conduct membership recruitment or intake processes once a year. Every fraternity and sorority is governed by one of four governing councils; each approaches recruitment or the intake of members in a different way. Recruitment is the term used to describe the procedure implemented to invite new members into the fraternities and sororities at USF that belong to the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils. Intake is the term used to describe the procedure implemented to invite new members into the fraternities and sororities at USF that belong to the Unified Greek Council and the National Pan-Hellenic Council. The University does require that all new members be regularly enrolled at USF in good academic standing. Most chapters have additional requirements regarding number of hours that should be taken or must be earned prior to joining, and grade point average.

To gain the best understanding of any of the recruitment or intake processes, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life recommends your student attends one or more of the following events:

- **Panhellenic Sorority Recruitment Orientation Night: Friday, August 30 at 7 pm in the MSC Oval Theater**
This is the first night of Sorority Recruitment. At this event, women who are interested in joining a Panhellenic Sorority will learn about the recruitment process and benefits of joining a sorority. Please note this is also the last day to register for Recruitment. There is a registration fee of \$76. To learn more about the sororities that belong to Panhellenic or to register for Recruitment, please visit www.usfpanhellenic.com.
- **Fraternity Recruitment Orientation Night: Monday, September 2 at 4 pm in the MSC Oval Theater**
This event will provide an overview of the fraternity recruitment process and allow men interested in joining Interfraternity Council organizations to meet each fraternity. There is no cost to register for Fraternity Recruitment. To learn more about the Interfraternity Council organizations or to register for Recruitment, please visit www.southfloridaifc.com.
- **Unified Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council Convocation Night: Thursday, Sept. 5 at 8 pm in MSC 2708**
This meeting will provide an opportunity for students interested in joining the organizations in the Unified Greek Council and the National Pan-Hellenic Council to understand how to understand the

intake process and how to join organizations in these two councils. Please note that those who would like to join organizations in this council must attend this event. Registration is not required.

All recruitment and intake processes are substance-free events. During these events, encourage your student to learn as much as they can about the organization before making a commitment to join to ensure they have made the best choice. Keep in mind that the selection process for fraternities and sororities is mutual, meaning that occasionally students do not receive invitations to join their top organizations or any organizations at all.

As your student makes the decision to join one of USF's fraternities and sororities, assist them in understanding that all were founded to advance scholarship, service, leadership, and integrity in a values-based community that helps students to examine their beliefs, grow as individuals, and develop skills that will enable them to be principled leaders that will change the world. Your student should be prepared to become involved in the many community service and philanthropic events that our organizations support. They should know that each organization will have meetings and activities designed to help new members get to know each other and the active members, as well as history, traditions, and eventually, the initiation rites which will make them full brothers and sisters of their chosen organization.

Should your student make the choice to join a fraternity or sorority, it's important that you remain involved, supportive, and interested. To help you successfully navigate this, we offer some things you should keep in mind.

- Ask questions: Talk to your student about what they are doing and how the organization is helping them to feel at home, grow, and learn.
- Be supportive: During the new member process students will at times feel stretched because they are acclimating to several new experiences simultaneously and it's always nice to have someone cheering you on!
- Ask if the organization has a parent's club and get involved if they do.
- Check out the chapter's and national organization's website: You will find out information about the history and purpose of the organization your student has joined in addition to the many resources available to them as a member.
- Get to know your student's "big brother or sister": This person serves as a mentor and can assist in making your student's experience a rewarding and positive one!
- Check-in: Make sure they are attending to their studies and other commitments outside of the organization. Some students find themselves so excited about the new opportunities that they forget about these important things.
- Get the name and contact information for the Chapter President, Big Brother or Sister, and the New Member Educator. These will be the people you will work with if you have questions about the new member process or if you have questions that arise during this time.
- Look out for changes in behavior, attitude, or communication, sleeping patterns, signs of exhaustion, etc. Sometimes if the process isn't going as expected, these norms may change and it's a sign that you may need to intervene or seek assistance in determining what is going on.
- In conversation with your student, if they seem to be evasive, secretive, vague, or don't want to elaborate about the process, this may also be a sign of the process not going as expected and you should feel compelled to ask deeper questions or seek assistance from the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life.

Being a new member is an exciting time for your student! The Office of Fraternity and Sorority staff is enthusiastic to continue providing opportunities for students to become engaged in their USF experience. Should you have any questions about the fraternal experience at USF or if you would like to explore ways to support your student's fraternal membership, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life or visit us on our website (www.usfgreeklife.com)