

Glossary of Greek Terms

Active - An initiated member of a fraternity or sorority. A member in good standing.

Alumna/Alumnus - An initiated member who has graduated. Singular. (Alumnae/Alumni are plural)

Associate/New Member- A member of a fraternity or sorority not yet initiated.

Bid - A formal invitation to join a chapter.

Big Brother/Sister - An active who befriends and becomes like an older brother/sister to a new member.

Brother/Sister - A term used by active members in a chapter when referring to each other.

Calls – A unique vocal expression attributed by an NPHC an organization.

Please Do: Enjoy listening to the unique calls of the groups.

Please Don't: Repeat an organization's particular call or response. It is considered a sign of disrespect.

Chapter - The local group of a national fraternity or sorority.

Charter - The official document recognizing a chapter's status by the national organization.

Candlelight - A ceremony in which a member reveals having been given a lavalier, fraternity pin, or engagement ring.

Colony- status of a new chapter before installation.

Colors - The official pair or triad of colors that represent a specific Greek organization.

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

Divine Nine: Term used to describe the nine NPHC affiliate organizations. Also the title of the book that chronicles the history of NPHC groups.

Dues - Charge of joining a fraternity or sorority. Covers costs of operation, formal events, activities and other events and varies by chapter.

Formal Recruitment - A time when fraternities/sororities sponsor activities seeking potential new members. Usually occurs in the fall semester, Informal Recruitment occurs in the spring.

Frat- Term used to refer to a fraternity or one's fraternity brother, usually in NPHC fraternities.

Gamma Chi - Sorority members who have disaffiliated from their chapters to guide potential members to their Greek membership during recruitment

Greek - N; Any member of a social fraternity or sorority. Adj; Greek System/Greek Life.

Handshake - A unique hand gesture/grip to each organization. Only initiated members will know the handshake.

Hazing - Any degrading activity that would cause mental or physical harm to an individual or group. This is completely unacceptable to any Valdosta State University student and should be reported immediately to the Office of Student Life or the National Hazing Hotline.

House Director/House Mom - A person hired to live in the chapter house and supervise the members.

IFC - Interfraternity Council; a representative governing body of fraternities affiliated with the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC).

Inactive Member - A member who has elected to become inactive in sorority/fraternity life. They have no say or participation in chapter activities and lose the benefits of membership.

Initiated Member - Any member who has gone through the initiation ceremony.

Initiation - A formal ritual ceremony that brings about the transition from new to initiated member.

Intake - Term for the process by which NPHC members are selected to become new members of an organization. Much more secretive than recruitment or rush, but generally includes an application and an interview process, followed by an educational program then an initiation (generally known as “crossing”). The period of membership intake varies from chapter to chapter, but cannot exceed 10 weeks.

Informational Meeting- An informational is a program usually hosted by NPHC organizations that strictly gives information to the general body about an organization.

Interest Meeting- A meeting hosted by NPHC for prospective members to receive information about and meet members of a Greek organization.

Lavaliere - A necklace with Greek letters on it hung only in the vertical. The informal representation is called a nallier.

Legacy - A person whose parent, sibling, or grandparent is an alumna or active member of a sorority or fraternity.

National(s) - A term referring to the central organization of a given fraternity or sorority.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) - The governing organization that promotes the historically African-American fraternities and sororities that belong to the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

Neophyte - Term used by NPHC groups when referring to new members.

New Member - A person who has accepted an invitation to a chapter and has not yet been initiated.

New Member Presentation - An event referred to by the NPHC where new members are presented to the Valdosta State University community. Also referred as: Coming Out Show/Probate.

“On the Yard” – an NPHC phrase meaning that a chapter is currently chartered/active on campus.

Open Recruitment - Membership selection process that occurs throughout the academic year; also known as continuous open bidding.

Order of Omega - National honor society that recognizes and promotes Greek leadership and scholastics.

Panhellenic Council - The governing organization that promotes and represents sororities belonging to the National Panhellenic Conference.

Philanthropy - A charitable project sponsored by a fraternity or sorority. Each National organization has a formally recognized philanthropy.

Pin - The active pin/badge 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.

Potential (New) Member - An undergraduate college man/woman who participates in the recruitment process. Commonly called a PNM.

Prophyte - An older member of an NPHC organization.

Ritual – Sacred, secret and inspirational ceremonies used to inspire and educate members about the importance of the organization.

Sands - An NPHC term for members of your new member class. Comes from the phrase "cross the burning sands" which means to cross over (become initiated) into full membership.

Signs – a unique display expressed by hand symbols by Greek members. Can be ‘thrown’ alone or in combination with other members of the group.

Please do: Enjoy the viewing of the various signs.

Please don't: Emulate an organization's sign. It is a sign of disrespect

Snap Bidding - The direct offering of a bid from a chapter to a potential member between the time bids are distributed and new member bid day activities begin during Panhellenic recruitment.

Social - A get-together with another group for a party, dinner, or other fun occasion.

Soror - NPHC term referring to one's sorority sister.

Stepping- a form of percussive dance in which the participant's entire body is used as an instrument to produce complex rhythms and sounds through a mixture of footsteps, spoken word, and hand claps. Though stepping may be performed by an individual, it is generally performed by groups of three or more, often in arrangements that resemble military formations

Strolling – NPHC Organizational members move together in a line expressing pride for their organization. In this line, members may express their pride through use of their organization's call, sign or historical information, ritual/custom dances, etc. All of this is done through movements that are unique to a particular organization.

Please Do: Enjoy watching, as each organization has a unique way and style of strolling.

Please Don't: Emulate the stroll or cut in between members of the line. That is considered a sign of disrespect