

# RECOGNITION AND GOVERNANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

The University of Pennsylvania values collegiate fraternities and sororities as an important component of the undergraduate student experience at the University. Fraternal organizations have existed at the University since 1849. These organizations complement the academic and non-academic aspects of the campus life by serving as a source of cultural, academic and social support as their members pursue their educational goals.

This policy

1. describes the relationship between individual fraternity/sorority colonies/chapters ("chapters") and the University,
2. outlines the framework for governance,
3. affirms the University's commitments to recognized chapters and
4. describes the responsibilities of each chapter and its sponsoring organization.

The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life ("OFSL"), with input from the Interfraternity Council ("IFC"), Intercultural Greek Council ("IGC") and Panhellenic Council ("Panhellenic") (each a "Governing Council") and Greek Alumni/Advisory Council ("GAC"), is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy.

## I. Framework for Recognition

### A. General Principles

1. Recognition is the formal process by which the University of Pennsylvania agrees that a fraternity or sorority may function on the campus, enroll members from the student body through recruitment and/or intake activities and identify its chapter with the University.
2. Only chapters of an inter/national independently incorporated organization ("National Sponsoring Body") are eligible for University recognition. The University's recognition is premised on the same basic principles that apply to the University's affiliation with external organizations: there must be commonality of goals and standards, mechanisms for accountability and provisions for the discontinuation of the affiliation should goals diverge or standards decline.
3. For colony and chapter recognition, it is critical that a local network of alumni/ae ("Alumni Sponsor") exists to work with the colony/chapter. The Alumni Sponsor is a critical element for the success of any colony/chapter. The Alumni Sponsor will consist of an identified group of alumni/ae or other adults who have agreed to provide mentoring and guidance to the chapter and its members to ensure long term functioning and organizational stability. The Alumni Sponsor also is tasked to ensure that all actions of the chapter are consistent with the mission and values of the University and the National Sponsoring Body. The Alumni Sponsor may be organized as a separate legal entity, and may be the legal fraternity entity identified as a responsible party in agreements between the University and the fraternity relating to disciplinary action against a chapter or to a chapter's use and occupancy of University-owned property

as a residential chapter house. For all residential fraternities, the Alumni Sponsor must also help to promote the financial viability of the chapter and will, to the extent individuals with the requisite expertise are available to the Alumni Sponsor, assist in developing and implementing plans for the management of and improvements to the chapter house. Continued recognition of a chapter requires ongoing active involvement by an Alumni Sponsor.

4. Because fraternity and sorority chapters should enhance the educational experience of students, it is appropriate for the University to provide support services that will help the chapters to function effectively for their members and enhance their stability over time.

## B. Levels of Recognition

### 1. Provisional Recognition

Provisional Recognition is the University's conditional approval of affiliation with a local chapter for a specified period, usually no shorter than one year, after an organization meets the criteria for recognition. To be eligible for Provisional Recognition, a chapter must meet all of the criteria described in section III.B. At the end of the period of Provisional Recognition, OFSL will conduct a review of the chapter and consult with the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Board ("FSAB") and the Vice Provost for University Life ("VPUL"). The Director of OFSL ("Director") will determine whether the chapter qualifies for Full Recognition or continued Provisional Recognition, or should have its recognition revoked or altered. Ordinarily, Provisional Recognition will apply during the establishment of a new chapter or the reestablishment of a formerly active chapter. In addition to meeting all requirements described in sections II and III.B, formerly active chapters seeking to re-establish must also meet any additional conditions set by the Director. A chapter in Provisional Recognition status may only participate in University-wide rush/membership selection processes to the extent permitted by the IFC, Panhellenic or IGC.

### 2. Full Recognition

Full Recognition accords a fraternity/sorority all of the privileges and resources described in section III.A of this policy while also establishing the fraternity/sorority's responsibilities under this policy, including those set forth in section III.B. If the University believes that the activities of a chapter are inconsistent with its policies or goals, the University reserves the right to change or revoke the chapter's recognition through the appropriate process.

### 3. Probationary Recognition

Probationary Recognition is a reduced level of recognition resulting from the University's withdrawal of certain privileges for a set time period. This status may be applied to a chapter that has failed to abide by applicable University policies and/or state, local or federal law. Before the end of the probationary period, the chapter's officers, National Sponsoring Body and Alumni Sponsor will be required to produce a written plan regarding corrective action to bring the chapter into full compliance with the policies and/or legal requirements that affected the chapter's status. At the end of the probationary period, OFSL will conduct a review of the chapter in consultation with the FSAB. Based on this review, the Vice Provost for University Life will determine whether the chapter will regain Full Recognition, continue Probationary Recognition or have its recognition revoked or altered.

## II. The Recognition Process

### A. Overview

1. Recognition is a multi-step process through which the University, in consultation with a National Sponsoring Body and an Alumni Sponsor, determines that a chapter meets the criteria established by this policy for affiliation with the University.
2. City-wide fraternities and sororities which, by charter of the National Sponsoring Body, are authorized to draw membership from more than one college/university within the greater Philadelphia area may be recognized under this policy, subject to the following additional conditions: only the membership drawn from the University of Pennsylvania will be recognized as the official fraternity/sorority chapter; participants from outside of the University will be considered "guests" of the chapter and the chapter will be held accountable for the actions of guests.
3. The recognition process begins with informal consultation among the OFSL, the Office of the Provost and other University offices identified by the Office of the Provost to assess how the possible addition of a chapter would affect the University community's social, cultural and academic environment.
4. Following a favorable recommendation upon the conclusion of the consultative process described in section II.A.3, a chapter seeking recognition and its National Sponsoring Body shall make a written application and submit all information specified in application guidelines provided by OFSL. This information will generally include: a written pledge of sponsorship by a National Sponsoring Body; identification of an Alumni Sponsor who will supervise the chapter on an ongoing basis; and specific information about the chapter's governance structure and financial plan.
5. A chapter seeking to operate a chapter house must also provide a detailed housing plan, which must include a description of the contractual arrangements for providing housing to students. Further, all chapter houses must conform to the University's requirements regarding safety, insurance coverage and financial accountability.

### B. Approval Process

1. Provisional Recognition is the first step in the recognition process. To be eligible for Provisional Recognition, a fraternity or sorority chapter must:
  - a. secure a commitment for affiliation from a National Sponsoring Body; and
  - b. identify an Alumni Sponsor.  
The chapter must also obtain approval from the appropriate undergraduate Governing Council, the GAC and OFSL.
2. The Director will submit each application to the appropriate Governing Council, as requested by the chapter, and the Governing Council will make a decision on the application in accordance with its policies and procedures.
3. If the chapter receives the approval of a Governing Council, the application for recognition will be forwarded to the GAC. After the chapter receives the approval of both the applicable Governing Council and the GAC, OFSL will complete its review of the application.
4. Provided that the information submitted by the chapter is acceptable to the University, the Director will issue an Offer of Provisional Recognition letter, which will include any special terms or conditions that apply to the chapter. The National Sponsoring Body, the Alumni Sponsor and the chapter seeking recognition must accept the offer of recognition in writing through their respective authorized officers before a chapter can be granted Provisional Recognition.

5. After a chapter has satisfied requirements contained in the Offer of Provisional Recognition as well as any other prerequisites to Full Recognition established by the University and the National Sponsoring Body, it may seek Full Recognition from the University. Both its National Sponsoring Body and its Alumni Sponsor must certify in writing that a chapter seeking Full Recognition has complied with all requirements for Full Recognition contained in the Offer of Provisional Recognition.
6. If the Director confirms that
  - a. all requirements for Full Recognition contained in the Offer of Provisional Recognition have been satisfied and
  - b. the chapter meets generally applicable criteria for Full Recognition, the Director will issue a letter awarding the chapter Full Recognition status.

## III. Privileges and Responsibilities of Recognition

### A. Privileges

In general, Full Recognition affords a fraternity/sorority the following privileges:

1. Identification of the chapter with the University and, subject to approval of OFSL, use of the University's name along with, but not in place of, identification with the National Sponsoring Body.
2. Advice and assistance of OFSL and other appropriate University offices in the conduct of the chapter's business affairs, operation of its house, if any, and its short-term and long-term financial planning.
3. Assistance and support of various University resources, such as the Division of Public Safety and the Division of Facilities and Real Estate Services, regarding safety and facilities-related issues.
4. Assistance from University offices, such as the Office of Development, Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, in communicating with the University's alumni of the local chapter.
5. Access to University facilities for official chapter functions, subject to the approval of OFSL and/or other appropriate University offices and subject to applicable charges.
6. Participation in the University's fraternity/sorority governance system, through IFC, Panhellenic or IGC and GAC.
7. Participation in official University-wide recruitment or membership solicitation programs, facilitated by the IFC, Panhellenic, IGC and/or GAC.
8. Participation in athletic, social and educational programs and activities provided for fraternal organizations.

### B. Responsibilities of All Chapters

Each chapter, regardless of its level of recognition or residential status, assumes the following obligations:

1. The chapter and its members must comply with all applicable laws and University policies as well as the requirements of its National Sponsoring Body organization.
2. The chapter must cooperate with University administrators, including, but not limited to, emergency response and law enforcement officials.
3. The chapter, collectively, must maintain a satisfactory cumulative grade point average and each of its individual members must remain in good standing. A student who is not in good standing with his or her school may not retain membership status or reside in the chapter house.

4. The chapter must notify OFSL, in a timely fashion, of any changes in the persons responsible for the chapter's operation (including, but not limited to, chapter officers and Alumni Sponsor and/or National Sponsoring Body representatives).
5. At least once per semester, the chapter must review with the Director its general progress and contributions during the previous term regarding chapter viability, compliance with University standards, issues of collective responsibility, projected planning and programming needs and any specific need for advisory services from the University.
6. The chapter must prepare an annual report for its National Sponsoring Body and Alumni Sponsor regarding the status of the undergraduate membership. The National Sponsoring Body must communicate at least once per semester with OFSL regarding its evaluation of the chapter.
7. The chapter must comply with the insurance and risk management requirements established by the University for residential chapter houses, set forth in the University's Policy Establishing Insurance Coverage Requirements and Indemnity Obligations for Residential Fraternities and Sororities.
8. The chapter must accept collective responsibility for activities of the chapter that violate the University's Code of Student Conduct or other policies and for violations of the University's rules by individual members and guests when such violations are approved or tolerated by the chapter, its leadership or members.
9. The chapter must maintain chapter viability through sound financial management and supervision.
10. The chapter must maintain participation in the University's fraternity and sorority governance system through active membership in the IFC, Panhellenic or IGC, and the GAC.
11. The chapter must contribute positively to the University community and to the development of individual chapter members in their role as students at the University.

### **C. Safety and Risk Management Standards for Residential Chapters Operating in Chapter Houses That Are Not Owned or Managed by the University**

Each residential chapter must meet the following additional requirements for initial and continued recognition:

1. The chapter must provide accommodations that are equal in safety and comfort to University dormitory housing. Chapter house accommodations are subject to the same University regulations, guidelines and standards applied to University dormitories and other residential facilities.
2. Chapter house accommodations must comply, on an ongoing basis, with the standards established in the University of Pennsylvania Life Safety Standards for Residential Fraternity/Sorority Chapter Houses.
3. Chapter house accommodations must be structurally sound and maintained in safe, sanitary and tenantable condition.
4. The chapter must submit to regular safety and compliance inspections, as set forth in the University of Pennsylvania Life Safety Standards for Residential Fraternity/Sorority Chapter Houses. All required certifications must be issued by third party service providers approved by the University and must provide evidence of life safety system functionality required by governmental authorities. The Alumni Sponsor will ensure that any identified deficiencies in the condition or operation of the chapter house are promptly corrected.

### **D. Chapter Houses in University-Owned Property**

1. Chapters that occupy University-owned properties are governed by two separate agreements. The Dormitory Agreement is a long-term agreement between the University and the National Sponsoring Body and/or the Alumni Sponsor that sets forth the structure and conditions under which a chapter may occupy a specific property. The Dormitory Agreement affirms that the governing principle of chapter house occupancy is the property's status as a University dormitory, and the operational and management relationship between the University and Sponsoring entity will be consistent with that concept. A Dormitory Agreement may be for any number of years, although usually these agreements have a term of 10 to 25 years, assuming all necessary conditions for continued occupancy are met. As constituent units of the University's system of dormitory housing, chapter houses must submit to regular safety and compliance inspections as set forth in the University of Pennsylvania Life Safety Standards for Residential Fraternity/Sorority Chapter Houses. They also must promptly correct any safety or compliance violations caused by chapter house residents or chapter activities.
2. Additionally, residents of all University-owned chapter houses sign an Occupancy Agreement, between each individual occupant and the University, lasting for not more than one academic year. The Occupancy Agreement reaffirms the chapter house resident's obligations, including the obligation to comply with the safety and behavioral standards that apply to every University student occupying dormitory housing.

## **IV. Mechanisms for Accountability**

Once a chapter receives Full Recognition by the University, the chapter will continue in that status as long as it meets all of the expectations articulated in this policy. On an annual basis, OFSL will review each chapter's compliance with these standards. If it is determined that a chapter has failed to meet its responsibilities under this policy, the University may implement alterations in the chapter's status in accordance with the appropriate process.

The process for addressing a chapter's violation of this or other University policy will depend on the nature and severity of the violation. The procedural options are described below:

### **A. Administrative Warning**

1. The Director, in consultation with University colleagues, may issue an administrative warning to address minor violations of this policy. Such a warning may be issued by OFSL following agreement between OFSL and the chapter about a course of corrective action to remedy the violation(s) at issue. Ordinarily, the time frame for corrective action will not extend beyond one month.
2. Before issuing an administrative warning, the Director or his designee should meet with the president and/or appropriate officers of the chapter to discuss the violation(s). If the Director and the chapter do not agree on a course of corrective action, the Director may refer the matter for formal discipline. In addition, if the chapter fails to take required corrective action after reaching an agreement with OFSL, the University reserves the right to refer the chapter to the formal disciplinary process.

### **B. Temporary Suspension Status**

1. The University may impose a temporary suspension status upon a chapter pending the outcome of the formal disciplinary process when it has reason to believe that the conduct or activities of a chapter poses a risk to safety or has caused or threatens to cause significant

harm to person or property. Such a suspension may be imposed only after consultation between the Director or his or her designee and at least one senior member of the central VPUL administration and the Director of the Office of Student Conduct (OSC).

2. OFSL must provide prompt written notice to the chapter's president, the Alumni Sponsor and the National Sponsoring Body outlining the reason(s) for the temporary suspension status, and any restrictions or conditions attached to it.
3. Ordinarily, during a temporary suspension, a chapter will not be able to conduct any chapter activities and the chapter members may be required to vacate the chapter house.
4. A temporary suspension does not eliminate the possibility of other, more permanent, modifications of a chapter's recognition status.

## **C. Process for Addressing Violations of Safety and Risk Management Standards for Residential Chapters**

1. If the University determines that a chapter has failed to comply with any of the Safety and Risk Management Standards established under section III.C or section III.D of this policy, the VPUL, after consulting with the Division of Public Safety, the Office of Risk Management and Insurance and the Division of Facilities and Real Estate Services, may impose restrictions on chapter house activities up to and including requiring that the chapter house be vacated until the condition is remedied and the non-compliance is corrected.
2. If, after reasonable notice and an opportunity to address the violation, a chapter fails to remedy a violation of any Safety and Risk Management Standard established under section III.C or III.D of this policy, the VPUL, in consultation with appropriate University offices, such as OFSL and the Division of Facilities and Real Estate Services, will determine whether a safety violation merits a change in the chapter's recognition status. Whenever practicable, the chapter will have an opportunity to be heard before a determination is made. If VPUL determines that a change in recognition status is appropriate, the chapter may be subject to suspension or withdrawal of its recognition.
3. Ordinarily, OFSL will advise the chapter as well as its National Sponsoring Body and the Alumni Sponsor in writing of the Safety and Risk Management Standards violation(s) under section III.C or III.D of this policy and the expected timeline for addressing them. If the chapter fails to meet the University's timeline, or if safety concerns are so significant as to merit such action, the University may take immediate action, up to and including
  - a. requiring that the chapter house be vacated immediately and
  - b. alteration of the chapter's recognition status.
4. A chapter may appeal a determination to alter its status based on a violation of Safety and Risk Management Standards under section III.C or III.D of this policy by writing to the Provost within 10 days after the determination is made.

## **D. The FSAB Process**

The procedures outlined in the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Board Judicial Charter will apply to violations other than violations of Safety and Risk Management Standards established under section III.C and III.D of this policy. The University reserves the right to place a chapter on administrative warning in lieu of formal discipline or to place a chapter on temporary suspension status pending completion of the disciplinary process.

# **V. Changes in Recognition Status**

## **A. Probationary Recognition**

1. The University may impose Probationary Recognition upon a chapter if it determines that the chapter has violated this or other University policy. A chapter may be placed on probation only after initiation of the procedures described in the FSAB Judicial Charter. Probationary Recognition status can be imposed through an agreement of responsibility (which must be signed by OFSL, all members of the chapter, its Alumni Sponsor and appropriate representatives of the National Sponsoring Body), or following a hearing. Failure to comply with the terms of probation or additional violations during the probationary period will subject a chapter to more severe discipline, up to expulsion.
2. Probationary Recognition will be for a specified period. At the end of the probationary period, OFSL will review the status of the chapter in consultation with the FSAB. Based on this assessment, the Vice Provost for University Life will determine whether the chapter will regain Full Recognition, continue in Probationary Recognition status or be subject to suspension or expulsion.

## **B. Suspension of Recognition**

1. The University may suspend a chapter's recognition when it determines that the chapter has violated this or other University policy and the chapter's conduct was serious enough to warrant the chapter's separation from the University for a period of time. In addition, suspension of a chapter by its National Sponsoring Body will automatically result in suspension of recognition by the University without further process.
2. Except for a temporary suspension, described above, a chapter's recognition may be suspended only following the initiation of the procedures described in the FSAB Judicial Charter. Suspension can be imposed through an agreement of responsibility or following a disciplinary hearing. Suspension of recognition will be for a specified period.
3. During the period of suspension, all activities of a chapter are suspended and all of its privileges revoked. During this period the National Sponsoring Body, working with the Alumni Sponsor, will be required to develop and submit a written plan of corrective action to bring the chapter into full compliance with this policy. If a chapter house is maintained, the Alumni Sponsor must cease its operation of the chapter house and the chapter and all residents must vacate the chapter house.
4. After the completion of a term of suspension, chapter members in good standing may be authorized to live in the chapter house and may be granted permission to resume participation in chapter activities and programs. Alternatively, the suspended chapter may be reorganized with newly recruited members. If a chapter has been suspended for three years or more, it must go through the process for seeking Provisional Recognition, outlined in section II of this policy.

## **C. Withdrawal of Recognition**

1. A chapter's recognition may be withdrawn when it is determined to be incapable of meeting its obligations under the terms of this policy for any reason. If a chapter house is maintained, the Alumni Sponsor must cease its operations of the chapter house, the chapter and all residents must vacate the chapter house and the National Sponsoring Body must revoke all privileges and authority for the chapter to function. Withdrawal of recognition terminates all



previously established agreements between the University and the chapter.

2. If a chapter's charter is suspended or withdrawn by its National Sponsoring Body, the University will withdraw the chapter's recognition immediately without further process.
3. A chapter's recognition may be withdrawn following initiation of the procedures described in the FSAB Judicial Charter even if no action has been taken by the National Sponsoring Body. If a chapter's recognition is withdrawn through the FSAB process, the FSAB will ordinarily make a recommendation as to when the National Sponsoring Body may be allowed to seek recolonization at the University.

## **D. Voluntary Withdrawal of Recognition**

1. A chapter may voluntarily relinquish its recognition for a specific period of time or indefinitely. The circumstances under which voluntary withdrawal might be appropriate include, but are not limited to, inadequate financial management, inadequate alumni support, overall lack of viability and inability to comply with the conditions of a chapter's Probationary Recognition.
2. In the event of voluntary withdrawal of recognition, the Alumni Sponsor must cease operations of the chapter house, the chapter and all residents must vacate the chapter house and the National Sponsoring Body must revoke all privileges and authority for the chapter to function.

## **E. Expulsion**

1. The University may expel a chapter when it determines that the chapter has violated this or other University policy in such an egregious manner as to warrant permanent separation from the University.
2. Expulsion means permanent closure of a chapter and terminates all agreements and relationships between the University and the chapter. At the time of expulsion, the Alumni Sponsor must cease operations of the chapter house, the chapter and all residents must vacate the chapter house and the National Sponsoring Body must revoke all privileges and authority for the chapter to function.
3. A chapter may be expelled only following the initiation of disciplinary procedures described in the FSAB Judicial Charter.

## **VI. Amendments**

Recommendations for amendments to this policy may originate with the IFC, Panhellenic, IGC, the GAC, the FSAB or OFSL. Any amendments to this policy will be issued in writing by the Vice Provost for University Life, with a reasonable period for chapters already in recognition status to comply with new requirements.