

Virginia Commonwealth University

Special Provisions for Fraternities and Sororities

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Official registration of men's and women's fraternities and sororities will be conferred by the University Student Commons and Activities (USCA) as part of the process of registering student organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University.

2. Procedures and Requirements

Every chapter of a national or international fraternity or sorority at VCU must meet the following conditions:

- 2.1. Meet all the conditions for the registration of a student organization as defined in the "*Policies and Procedures for Student Organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University.*"
- 2.2. Maintain membership in the applicable campus governing council: College Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, or Interfraternity Council.
 - 2.2.1. If an inter/national organization does not fall under the provision of one of these governing councils, an organization may be under the administrative guidance of the Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Team at VCU until an appropriate governing body is formed.
- 2.3. Be in good standing with its inter/national organization.
- 2.4. Place a copy of its inter/national and local governing documents on file with USC&A. These documents will be kept in confidence to the extent permitted by law and are generally subject to mandatory disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Any group whose inter/national organization prohibits filing their constitutive documents may request permission to provide them only for review by university officials at the time of seeking Official Recognition and upon request at any future time. *Because records used in the transaction of public business and in the possession of VCU may be subject to disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the RSO should redact any confidential information before submitting documents.* The governing documents shall include (if they exist):
 - 2.4.1. Inter/National Constitution and Bylaws.
 - 2.4.2. Inter/National Standing Rules and Policies.
 - 2.4.3. Local chapter Bylaws, Operating Procedures, and Chapter Code of Conduct.

- 2.4.4. Local Articles of Incorporation (if they exist).
- 2.4.5. Copies of the above documents, when revised, are to be promptly filed.
- 2.5. Adhere to the provisions of its governing documents.
- 2.6. Meet at least once a semester with a university official to discuss chapter issues.
- 2.7. Comply with the *Shared Standards Agreement for Fraternities and Sororities at Virginia Commonwealth University* (FSL Handbook).
- 2.8. Maintain a safe and healthy environment in any chapter facility (chapter house, residence, chapter room, lodge, or meeting area), if any, including, but not limited to, adequate refuse collection, property upkeep and maintenance, and satisfaction of building, zoning, and safety codes as required by local fire, health, and governmental agencies. This provision includes, but is not limited to, the requirement that appropriate government agencies (e.g., Fire Department, Department of Health Services) are asked to perform regular inspections on an annual basis and certify that each facility complies with applicable laws and regulations under their respective jurisdictions.
 - 2.8.1. File a current certificate of liability insurance coverage with USC&A at least annually. Organizations which do not have continuous year round coverage must file a certificate of insurance showing proof of liability coverage on an event-by-event basis.
- 2.9. Conduct its business practices in a lawful and ethical manner, and conducting its fiscal affairs in accordance with generally accepted practices.
- 2.10. Establish, maintain, and comply with a well-defined code of conduct, and shall ensure that all of its members have a working understanding of the code of conduct. The fraternity or sorority shall establish and maintain an internal judicial system to enforce this code. The University must receive an annual copy of this code of conduct if it is not clearly included in the organization's constitution/bylaws.
- 2.11. Establish and maintain a program for the academic advancement of each of its members and designate a student member or officer to maintain accurate membership rosters, receive chapter grade reports, and act as a liaison to USC&A.
- 2.12. Demonstrate periodically to the University that it has complied with the provisions of this document and is eligible for continued recognition by the University.

3. University Services Available to Eligible Fraternities and Sororities

- 3.1. Fraternities and sororities which agree to and abide by the aforementioned provisions and regulations for official recognition, and are in good standing (i.e., not subject to any sanction, which restricts eligibility, imposed by their inter/national organization, campus governing council or USC&A), are eligible to receive the following services from the University:

- 3.1.1. Advice and counsel from university student affairs professionals, as well as referrals and resources, in the areas of chapter development and programming, leadership development, personal safety and risk management, alcohol and substance use and abuse, sexual assault and abuse, stress management, eating disorders, etc.
- 3.1.2. Additional assistance and counsel may be available in the areas of chapter governance; judicial concerns; interpreting University policies, procedures and regulations; providing information on state and local law as they relate to membership activities (e.g., hazing); educational and social programming; general fiscal matters; emergency preparedness; etc.
- 3.1.3. Upon request and consistent with student privacy laws, assistance or administrative support related to maintaining membership records and computing chapter grade point averages.
- 3.1.4. The governing councils may develop and maintain a system for adjudicating violations of University policies and procedures under the direction of the University Student Commons and Activities staff responsible for student organization judicial action. All activities and decisions of the fraternity judicial committees shall be subject to review and final authority of the University judicial system for student organizations.

4. Membership Practices of Social Fraternities and Social Sororities

4.1. Fraternities and Sororities Exemption:

Title IX does not apply to the membership practices of a social fraternity or social sorority if the active membership consists primarily of students in attendance at an institution of higher education and the fraternity or sorority is exempt from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code. 20 U.S.C. §1681(a)(6)(A); 34 C.F.R. § 106.14(a). All other programs and activities of social fraternities and sororities are governed by Title IX if they receive any Federal financial assistance.

Professional fraternities and sororities and service and honor societies are subject to the requirements of Title IX and may not exclude members on the basis of sex. 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7). An affirmative answer to any of the following questions is evidence that the organization is professional, service, or honorary in nature and not a social fraternity or sorority for Title IX purposes.

1. Is the organization's membership limited to persons pursuing or having interest in a particular field of study, profession, or academic discipline?
2. Is the membership limited to individuals who have a high level of achievement in scholarship or any other endeavor?
3. Are the members permitted to hold membership in other fraternities or sororities at the same level of education?

5. **Definitions**

- 5.1. Risk Management: for the purposes of this document and interpretations of policies, practices and judicial action, the definition of risk management and its component elements may align with North American Interfraternity Conference, National Panhellenic Conference, or Holmes and Murphy standards.

6. **References**

- 6.1. [US Department of Education Exemption from Title IX](#)
- 6.2. Policies and Procedures for Student Organizations at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- 6.3. Student Organization Conduct Procedures Manual
- 6.4. Student Organization Manual
- 6.5. CPC Constitution and Judicial Process (located on RamsConnect)
- 6.6. IFC Constitution and Judicial Process (located on RamsConnect)
- 6.7. MGC Constitution and Judicial Process (located on RamsConnect)
- 6.8. NPHC Constitution and Judicial Process (located on RamsConnect)]
- 6.9. [North American Interfraternity Conference](#)
- 6.10. [National Panhellenic Conference](#)
- 6.11. [Holmes and Murphy](#)

7. **Approvals and Revisions**

USC&A Approval: August 1, 2019

SAAC Approval: April 27, 2001

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