

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

# FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK  
2024 HANDBOOK: SECTION FIVE

RESIDENTIAL LIFE | FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE  
Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

It is the goal of the Residential Life-Fraternity and Sorority Life to “provide educational programs, services, and resources toward holistic growth of its members; and to support the ideals of the Fraternity and Sorority Community by challenging its members to live by those ideals.” Towards these ends, Residential Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life has created the New Member Education/Membership Intake Handbook to help guide you through the exciting and important process of welcoming new members into your organization. Becoming a new member is an exciting part of the fraternity or sorority experience, and should be respected by creating a positive environment.

All new members ascribe to the FSL Statement of Shared Values:

The fraternity and sorority community at Columbia University strives to foster a holistic collegiate experience that will strengthen a commitment to life-long membership and our alma mater.

We believe that through our dedication and promotion of social consciousness we greatly contribute to the creation of a vibrant cultural community that emphasizes diversity, inclusiveness, and mutual respect. We are values based organizations and, through our actions, we embody these ideals and inspire others.

**Leadership. Scholarship. Empowerment**

This Handbook provides guidelines that will create a positive intake experience for both current and new members. The manual also aims to inform you of Columbia University policies and regulations regarding potential Greek Letter Organization members. For more information on membership, interested parties can see Section II of the FSL Handbook. To ensure that you are following these policies, please communicate with your chapter advisor, especially in the planning process for intake.

## **I. EXPECTATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Students at Columbia University are expected to conduct themselves in a manner supportive of the educational mission of the institution. Integrity, respect for the person and property of others, and a commitment to intellectual and personal growth in a diverse population are values deemed fundamental to membership in this university community.

The following basic expectations for fraternity and sorority members have been established:

1. I will know and understand the ideals expressed in my chapter ritual and will strive to incorporate them in my daily life.
2. I will support a positive new member education program that is alcohol free.
3. I will not harass, physically or verbally, oral or written, which is past the bounds of protected free speech.
4. I will not threaten the mental health, physical health or safety of any person or persons including hazing, drug or alcohol abuse, and other forms of destructive behavior.
5. I will not intentionally disrupt or obstruct the lawful activities of the university or its members including their exercise of the right to assemble and to peacefully protest.
6. I will not allow theft of or damage to chapter, personal, university or public property or services or illegal possession or use of the same.
7. I will not physically harm or threaten physical harm to any person or persons, including but not limited to assault, sexual abuse, or other forms of physical abuse.
8. I will not use nor support the illegal purchase, use, possession or distribution of alcohol, drugs or controlled substances.
9. I will respect the health and safety of all living beings.
10. I will acknowledge that a clean and attractive environment is essential to both physical and mental health; therefore, I will do my best to see that the chapter property is properly cleaned and maintained.
11. The fraternity or sorority will not tolerate or condone any form of sexually abusive behavior on the part of its members, whether physical, mental, or emotional. This is to include any actions, which are demeaning to any person or persons including but not limited to sexual assault or verbal harassment.

Culpability is not diminished for acts in violation of this code that are committed in ignorance of the code or under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or improper use of controlled substances.

## **II. HAZING**

RESIDENTIAL LIFE-FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE AND COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE FOR HAZING.

### **A. New York State Law**

New York statutory law includes two (2) provisions making hazing an illegal act and one (1) provision requiring the adoption of university regulations proscribing hazing.

1. New York Penal Law 120.16; Hazing in the First Degree: A person is guilty of hazing in the first degree when, in the course of another person's initiation into or affiliation with any organization, he/she intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person and thereby causes injury. Hazing in the First Degree is a class A misdemeanor.
2. New York Penal Law 120.17; Hazing in the Second Degree: A person is guilty of hazing in the second degree when, in the course of another person's initiation or affiliation with any organization, he/she intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct, which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person. Hazing in the second degree is a violation.

### **B. Essential Policies for the Columbia Community**

#### **Hazardous Activity in Connection with Initiations and Affiliations (often referred to as hazing)**

University policy and state law (New York Penal Law Section 120.16 and New York Education Law Section 6430) prohibit what is often referred to as hazing. In accordance with New York Education Law Section 6430, the following rules and regulations supplement existing university rules and regulations for the maintenance of public order on university campuses and other university property used for educational purposes:

1. Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental, emotional or physical health or involves the forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization is prohibited.
2. Any person who engages in conduct prohibited by the foregoing paragraph shall be subject to ejection from university campuses and property and, in the case of a student or faculty violator, to suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate disciplinary action by the Dean or other university officer having jurisdiction. Any organization that authorizes such conduct may be subject to rescission of its permission to operate on university campuses or property.
3. A copy of these rules and regulations shall be given to all students enrolled in the university and shall be deemed to be part of the bylaws of all organizations operating on the university's campuses. Each such organization shall review annually such bylaws with individuals affiliated with such organization.
4. These rules and regulations are applicable to all students, faculty, and other staff as well as visitors and other licensees and invitees

The following links provides the definition of hazing at Columbia University and provides links to resources on campus: <https://www.cc-seas.columbia.edu/hazing>

### **C. Interpretation of the Definition of Hazing**

In determining whether an activity constitutes hazing, the university shall use the common and ordinary meaning of the terms in the definition. If an organization is unsure whether a proposed activity will constitute hazing, the organization should feel free to contact the Residential Life- Fraternity & SorORITY Life for clarifications. As a reference the following definition is provided:

Hazing is any action taken or situation created intentionally:

- that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule
- risks emotional and/or physical harm
- to members of a group or team
- whether new or not
- regardless of the person's willingness to participate

Any violation of the above definitions and interpretations will be subject to investigation and disciplinary action.

#### **D. Hazing Prevention Guidelines**

All groups at the university are expected to adhere to the same policies. All chapters must agree to abide by and comply with the acceptable guidelines approved by FSL, which complies with the policies and practices outlined by the Inter/National organization, New York State Law and University Policy. Historically, specific questions have been raised by Fraternity and Sorority chapters. Please review the following intake practices, which have been identified as acceptable or unacceptable:

**Physical Activity:** Unacceptable. Because of the potential to use exercise as a punitive mechanism and because of concerns about physical limitations of new members, intake programs should not include a physical element. (Note: physical activity includes but is not limited to exercise, work outs, running, etc.)

**Uniforms:** Acceptable under the following conditions: As mandated by the Inter/National organization and only if professional. Uniforms cannot interfere with the academic institution or the student's ability to function within that institution. There must be no negative ramifications/consequences for a person choosing not to wear a uniform.

**Marching:** Unacceptable unless included as part of a show. Marching is defined as but is not limited to potential new members linked arm in arm, stepping or stomping loudly in unison, dipping and/or chanting/singing.

**Surfacing Shows, New Member Presentations, or "Probates":** Acceptable according to the Inter/National guidelines and the following conditions: Only organizations with Full Recognition at Columbia University may host surfacing event. Physical, mental and/or verbal abuse during surfacing shows are strictly prohibited. Chapters must give proper and timely notification to Fraternity and Sorority Life prior to the show.

- (1) Contact information for New Member Educator.
- (2) A list of names and contact information for all persons surfacing must be submitted to Fraternity & Sorority Life at least 48 hours in advance.
- (3) Written approval by chapter advisor that event is sanctioned by national organization.

**Walking in Line:** Unacceptable. Walking in line is defined as potential new members walking one in front of each other in a line. This also includes cutting corners and any other structured form of walking in formation.

**Walking in Unison:** Acceptable. Potential new members may walk together in unison. (Note: walking in unison is defined as walking together in/on the same stride. Not to be confused with marching. See above for definition of marching.) Walking in unison, as an accidental occurrence is acceptable; however chapters should refrain from mandating potential new members to walk in unison.

**Mandating Social Probation:** Unacceptable. Social Probation is defined as but is not limited to:

- (1) Not being able to socialize and or speak with friends, family, professors, employers, etc.
- (2) Not being able to attend social events such as parties, programs, etc.

**Greetings:** Unacceptable unless included in a show. Greetings are defined as formalized ways in which a potential new member is required to address a current member of the organization in which skits, songs, prose, etc. are incorporated to imply and/or define the amount of respect, admiration and/or appreciation of the current member the

potential new member has.

**Viewings:** Unacceptable. However, meetings with two or more organizations at which potential new members are present are acceptable with proper registration and notification to Fraternity & Sorority Life. Viewings are defined as allowing members of other chapters or organizations to see, look at, or view potential new members.

**Cross pledging:** Unacceptable. Cross pledging is defined as allowing members from another organization (fraternity and/or sorority) to view, question, pledge, come into physical contact, etc. with potential new members from your organization.

**Sleep Deprivation:** Unacceptable. No new member activity should go past midnight nor begin prior to 8am.

**Verbal, mental or physical threat:** Unacceptable.

**Physical contact or violence:** Unacceptable.

**Dietary restrictions and/or forced consumption:** Unacceptable. Requiring a potential new member to limit their eating habits and/or forced consumption of any substances (including but not limited to water, food, alcohol, condiments, etc.)

**Power hierarchies:** Unacceptable.

**Pre and Post Pledging:** Unacceptable.

**Auxiliary Groups:** Unacceptable. The sponsorship of and the participation in auxiliary organizations (pre-membership), is inconsistent with the purpose and the philosophy of social fraternal organizations.

**E. Policy Regarding Uniforms, Probate Shows, Marching, Walking in Unison, Social Probation, Greetings, etc.**

A written mandate from the Inter/National Organization of the use and approval of any of the above listed must be updated and on file **each semester** the new member education/intake program is conducted. A letter must be received **PRIOR** to the first day of the new member education/intake program by Fraternity & Sorority Life. This letter must be on Inter/National Organization letterhead with contact information of designee approving the use of uniforms, probate show, etc. Chapter leaders should work with the Fraternity & Sorority life to ensure that actions do not lead to hazing and to facilitate a positive recruitment.

**G. Repercussions for Hazing**

Columbia University has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to hazing. In order to maintain the quality of the fraternity and sorority community, students can uphold the community standards outlines in Section III of the Fraternity & Sorority Life Handbook. This section of the handbook also has an outline of the judicial process for chapter offenses at Columbia University. Chapters will be held accountable at the group adjudication level and individuals will be held accountable via the Dean's Discipline Process.