Fraternity & Sorority Life

Recognition Policy
2014
RECOGNITION POLICY
FOR FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

DEFINITION
Recognition is the formal process by which Columbia University agrees that a fraternity or sorority may function on the campus, enroll members from the undergraduate body through recruitment/intake activities, and identify its chapter with the University. ALPHA Standards shall serve as the assessment for recognition to be granted or rescinded. For the purpose of this recognition policy, the terms "fraternity" and "sorority" are used to designate a Greek Letter Organization. It applies to all social fraternities and sororities, whether residential or non-residential. This Recognition Policy may be amended, rescinded, or superseded at any time by action of Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life. Benefits and privileges extended to recognized fraternities and sororities under this, or any other University policy, are subject to the availability of University resources for the purposes specified and do not constitute entitlements. Recognition serves only the limited purposes described herein and is not intended in any way to alter the legal relationship between Columbia University and the fraternity or sorority. Each fraternity or sorority is, and remains, an independent legal entity responsible for its own actions and for meeting its own legal duties and obligations. It is understood that Columbia does not, by this action, assume any legal responsibility for the supervision or control of fraternity or sorority activities, but reserves the right to withdraw the privileges conferred by this policy and to take such other actions as may be lawful and appropriate. Recognition pursuant to this policy does not constitute an endorsement by Columbia University of a particular fraternal organization or its activities.

Adapted from the Cornell University Recognition Policy for Fraternities & Sororities

Fraternal organizations eligible for recognition under this policy shall have the following characteristics:
1. Chapters shall be legal entities separate from Columbia.
2. They shall be entitled to be subjectively selective in their membership within the limits of the University's non-discrimination policies.
3. Single sex fraternal organizations shall be entitled to single sex membership consistent with regulations promulgated pursuant to Title IX of the U.S. Education Act Amendments of 1972 and such other laws or regulations as may apply.

RATIONALE FOR RECOGNITION POLICY:
The Recognition Policy enables the University to maintain a record of Greek organizations of which Columbia students are members. This record facilitates communication between the University and the Greek organizations and their members and permits the University to readily identify those Greek organizations, which are entitled to the benefits of recognition. The policy is further supported by the following assumptions:
(A) Fraternities and sororities are an integral part of the educational environment at Columbia and are expected to support the core values of a Columbia education.
(B) The University is concerned about student welfare outside the classroom, in the university-owned residential buildings and independently owned residential units operated by the Greek organizations.
(C) All national fraternities and sororities are required by their parent organizations to be recognized by the University.
(D) Mutual responsibility is needed between the University and the fraternities and sororities.
Fraternities and sororities, by way of recognition, are accountable to the University.
CONFERRAL OF RECOGNITION
Recognition may be conferred, modified or withdrawn by the Dean of Student Affairs or his/her designee consistent with the provisions of this policy.

LEVELS OF RECOGNITION
The Office of Residential Programs- Fraternity & Sorority Life reserves the right to amend these general guidelines when appropriate or necessary. A fraternity or sorority is designated in one of four stages of recognition: provisional, full, probationary, and rescission. Changes in organizations' level of recognition typically will be implemented by Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life. The Inter/National Headquarters of chapters recognized on campus will be notified in writing of a change in status by the Director for Fraternity & Sorority Life.

A. Provisional Recognition
Provisional recognition describes the University's conditional approval for a specified period. Provisional recognition will be applied during the establishment of a new fraternity or sorority or the re-establishment of a former fraternity or sorority chapter at Columbia. The group will submit a statement of intent to comply with full recognition criteria at the end of the provisional time period. Should an organization be found responsible for violating policy, the institutions’ recognition of the group will be automatically withdrawn.

B. Full Recognition
Full recognition accords the fraternity or sorority all the rights, privileges, obligations, and University resources as outlined in the section of this document titled "Recognition Requirements and Obligations of the University and Greek Letter Organizations."

REQUIREMENTS & OBLIGATIONS
1. Recognized fraternities and sororities must submit the ALPHA Standards of Excellence by the specified date. See Alpha Standards Section in the manual.
2. City-wide fraternities and sororities whose membership is drawn from more than Columbia may fall within this policy. In order to be considered for recognition, the city-wide group must have national sponsorship or be approved by the Director for Fraternity & Sorority Life. Moreover, only the membership drawn from Columbia University will be recognized as the official fraternity/sorority chapter; participants from outside the University will be considered "guests" of the fraternity or sorority. In the event the president of the city-wide group is not a Columbia student an official liaison between the university and the chapter must be designated. Contact information for the liaison must be on file. The official chapter is responsible for the actions of their guests. In the event Columbia University students are not active the city-wide chapter will be placed on dormant status.
3. Collective responsibility for the behavior of the members when in their chapter house or when acting as a group, or subgroup, outside of the chapter house.
4. Acceptance of the appropriate council’s rules and regulations and acceptance into one of these groups.
5. Compliance with generally accepted standards of neighborliness, including exterior neatness of the premises, the avoidance of unreasonable noise levels and compliance with related local laws.
6. Membership shall be comprised of Columbia University undergraduate students and is subject to all provisions of this recognition policy.
7. It is a privilege for a fraternity or sorority to occupy University owned facilities. This privilege can be revoked if the organization does not maintain such premises in condition satisfactory to the University and in compliance in all respects with the terms of the Chapter Residence Expectations and the Terms & Conditions of the Housing contract.
8. Compliance with the terms of all contractual agreements with the University.
9. Compliance with all applicable University policies, rules and regulations.
10. Cooperation in University investigations concerning compliance with any University policy, rules or regulation.
11. Compliance with all inter/national headquarters Risk Management and FIPG policies.

**Benefits of Full Recognition:**
Upon Full Recognition a sorority or fraternity is eligible for the following privileges and benefits:

1. Identification of the chapter with Columbia and use of the University's name along with, but not in place of, identification with the sponsoring body.
2. Eligibility for participation in the University's organization(s) related to the self-governance of the Greek system at Columbia.
3. Participation in a University membership solicitation program or separate membership solicitation program, as articulated and monitored by the self-governance organization of the Greek system within the terms of University policies.
4. Participation in the educational, social and athletic programs and activities of the University that are provided for fraternal organizations.
5. Access to and use of University facilities for official functions as approved by the University offices under whose jurisdiction utilization of a particular University facility is regulated and controlled.
6. Ability to reserve space on campus free of charge.
7. Utilize the resources made available by Fraternity & Sorority Life.
8. Eligibility for Chapter Residence when available.

**Continuation of Recognition:**
Chapters are required to continue to meet the Criteria for Full Recognition each year to remain recognized and in good standing. Submissions of updated documents are due on the designated dates listed in this policy. Failure to maintain certain materials on file with Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life may result in Rescission of Recognition.

**Probation and Rescission of Recognition**
When a chapter no longer meets the criteria for Full Recognition, or during a period of Provisional Recognition, no longer is making satisfactory progress toward Full Recognition, Full or Provisional Recognition may be withdrawn, or the chapter may be placed on Probationary Recognition status. The Greek Judicial Board and Director for Fraternity & Sorority Life may recommend a change in an organization’s status at any time. Below are general guidelines for changes in an organization’s recognition status. The Office of Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life reserves the right to amended or superseded these general guidelines at any time. In those cases where Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life or the Greek Judicial Board recommends to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or his/her designee that a chapter lose its official recognition, the decision to rescind recognition requires administrative review and approval by the Dean of Student Affairs or their designee and may be altered, deferred, or suspended. The inter/national headquarters will be notified as soon as possible of any violations that are under review in a cooperative effort between the institution and the inter/national organizations hosted at Columbia University.

**A. Probationary Recognition**
A chapter may be placed on Probation with or without a disciplinary process. Violations of university policy or issues regarding behavior would warrant a disciplinary process. If a chapter fails to meet certain minimum recognition requirements there would be no disciplinary process and automatic Probation designated. This includes an organization’s housing privilege.
Probationary Recognition describes the University's withdrawal of certain University service/benefits and/or its applying certain sanctions against the chapter as determined by Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life with recommendations from any of the following: Greek Judicial Board, Senior Assistant Dean of Judicial Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs or their designee. Probationary Recognition signifies that the chapter has failed to abide by University standards, codes or guidelines, by state, local, or federal laws and statutes, and/or has failed to comply with the procedures and criteria outlined in this recognition policy. Housing privileges can be revoked without loss of recognition.

Official notification of Probationary Recognition will be shared in writing with the chapter, alumni advisor, and inter/national organization. To be restored to full recognition, the chapter must fulfill certain expectations as detailed by Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life or the appropriate designee. In the event the chapter is not in compliance with the criteria for Full Recognition upon expiration of the period of Probationary Recognition, the procedures for Rescission of Recognition will be initiated.

Upon demonstration to the satisfaction of Fraternity & Sorority Life or appropriate designee that the chapter is once again in compliance with the criteria for Full Recognition, the chapter may be restored to Full Recognition status. If a chapter is placed on Probationary Status three times within a five-year period, the fourth offense may result in Rescission of Recognition.

B. Rescission of Recognition

Should a chapter fail to meet the Full Recognition criteria or the expectations set forth by the appropriate designee for its period of probationary or provisional recognition; or when there has been a history of multiple disciplinary actions, behavior problems, and/or noncompliance with policies; or for any other significant reason that has been deemed to be seriously detrimental: to the safety and well-being of Columbia students, the mission and goals of the University and its relationship to the community, and/or the integrity of Columbia’s fraternity and sorority system, recognition of the organization can be rescinded with a recommendation made to the Dean of Student Affairs or his/her designee. Recommendations for recession of recognition can be made by any of the following: Greek Judicial Board, Senior Assistant Dean of Judicial Affairs, Assistant Dean of Community Development, Associate Dean of Student Affairs or their designee. Official notification of Rescission of Recognition will be shared in writing with the chapter, alumni corporation, and inter/national organization. Chapters not recognized by Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life are prohibited from occupying university-owned fraternity/sorority houses and must wait at least three years from rescission to apply for recognition again.

ADDITIONAL:

1. It is understood that fraternities and sororities shall not use the name of the University for any purpose other than chapter identification as described above.
2. In no event shall any fraternity or sorority use the University's name or tax identification number or hold itself out in such manner as to suggest that it is synonymous with, or authorized to act on behalf of, Columbia or that its actions are in any way approved, sponsored or endorsed by Columbia. Violation of this section may result in withdrawal of recognition.
3. Residential Programs-Fraternity & Sorority Life may adopt additional standards, operating principles and procedures not inconsistent herewith, as deemed necessary or appropriate to facilitate the implementation of this Recognition Policy.
4. The Chapter President is responsible for ensuring all materials are submitted on time. Chapter Presidents should work with the chapter leadership, alumni advisor and national organization in obtaining needed documents.