

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

RECOGNITION POLICY 2024 HANDBOOK: SECTION TWO

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

I. DEFINITION OF RECOGNITION

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 student body through recruitment and intake activities, and identify its chapter with the university. ALPHA Standards serve as an assessment for recognition to be granted or rescinded.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 This Recognition Policy may be amended, rescinded, or superseded at any time by action of Residential Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life.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 in this policy and is not intended in any way to alter the legal relationship between Columbia University and the fraternity or sorority. Nor does it alter the legal relationship between Columbia University and individual fraternity or sorority members. 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 as defined by chapters' national headquarters. 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 other lawful or appropriate actions towards fraternity and sorority recognition. Recognition pursuant to this policy does not constitute an endorsement by Columbia University of a particular fraternal organization or its activities at the national level.

Adapted from the Cornell University Recognition Policy for Fraternities & Sororities

Fraternal organizations eligible for recognition under this policy shall have the following characteristics:

1. Be legal entities separate from Columbia.
2. 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.

II. RATIONALE FOR RECOGNITION POLICY

The Recognition Policy enables the university to maintain a record of fraternities and sororities of which Columbia students are members. Recognition facilitates communication between the university and the fraternity and sorority chapters and their members, and permits the university to readily identify those chapters which are entitled to the benefits of recognition. The policy is 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.

III. CONFERRAL OF RECOGNITION

Recognition may be conferred, modified or withdrawn by the Dean of Undergraduate Student Life or their designee consistent with the provisions of this policy. Residential Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life reserves the right to amend or supersede these general guidelines at any time.

IV. LEVELS OF RECOGNITION

Residential Life-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 Life-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 of Fraternity & Sorority Life.

When a chapter no longer meets the criteria for Full Recognition, or is on Provisional Recognition, and is not making satisfactory process toward Full Recognition, Full or Provisional Recognition may be withdrawn, or the chapter may be placed on Probationary Recognition status. The IGC Judicial Board and Director for Fraternity & Sorority Life may recommend a change in an organizations' status at any time.

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 institution's 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.

The **requirements and obligations** of recognition:

1. Recognized fraternities and sororities must submit the ALPHA Standards of Excellence by the first Friday of December, unless otherwise specified.
2. Recognized fraternities and sororities must maintain at least two active members that are undergraduate students at the University (effective January 2023).
3. 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. It is preferred that the chapter's charter be under Columbia University. 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 considered dormant. A dormant chapter is defined as a chapter with no active members who attend Columbia University.
4. 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.
5. Acceptance into one of the governing councils (IFC, MGC, or Panhellenic).

6. Acceptance of the appropriate council's rules and regulations and acceptance into one of these groups.
7. 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. Please see the [Columbia Housing Guide to Living](#) for further explanation of student expectations.
8. Membership shall be comprised of Columbia University undergraduate students and is subject to all provisions of this recognition policy.
9. It is a privilege for a fraternity or sorority to occupy university owned facilities. This privilege can be revoked at any time at the discretion of the university and/or 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.
10. Compliance with the terms of all contractual agreements with the university.
11. Compliance with all applicable university policies, rules and regulations.
12. Completion of Columbia College Undergraduate Student Life's Club Refuel, and Barnard's Club Refuel if applicable.
13. Cooperation in University investigations concerning compliance with any university policy.
14. Compliance with all inter/national headquarters Risk Management and Fraternal Information and Programming Group (FIPG) policies.
15. Compliance with University requirement of maintaining a comprehensive general liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00 (one million dollars) of primary liability coverage (each occurrence), with general aggregate coverage of at least \$2,000,000.00 (two million dollars). Such liability insurance shall include Columbia University, its officers, employees and agents, as an additional named insured and shall be written with an insurance carrier acceptable to the University.

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 FSL 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 FSL 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 if/when available. Housing is NOT guaranteed for any chapter recognized at Columbia University.

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 Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life may result in rescission of recognition.

C. Probationary Recognition

A chapter may be placed on probation with or without a disciplinary process. Violations of university policy or issues regarding behavior generally warrant a disciplinary process. If a chapter fails to meet certain minimum recognition requirements, there would be no disciplinary process and automatic probation would be designated. This includes an organization's housing privilege.

Probationary Recognition describes the university's withdrawal of certain university service or benefits and/or its applying sanctions against the chapter as determined by Residential Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life with recommendations from any of the following: Inter-Greek Council Judicial Board, Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards, Dean of Undergraduate Student Life 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 Life-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 chapter will be recommended for Rescission of Recognition.

Effective January 2023, all recognized chapters must maintain at least two active members that are fully-enrolled undergraduate students at the University. If a chapter has fewer than two members by the end of each semester, the chapter will immediately be placed on Probationary Recognition and will have two semesters to reach the minimum number required. If the chapter is unable to reach two active members within the allotted timeframe, the chapter will be recommended for Rescission of Recognition.

D. Dormancy Status

Chapters who graduate or lose all of their undergraduate members (due to transferring, leave of absences, etc.) will be considered dormant. Dormant chapters are considered recognized but do not have full recognition privileges. Dormant chapters will have two academic semesters to initiate at least two undergraduate students into the chapter before they lose recognition.

Requirements of a chapter to remain recognized while in dormancy status are:

1. No undergraduate members enrolled at the four undergraduate schools.
2. Chapter Advisor keeps contact with Fraternity and Sorority Life staff and has at least one meeting per semester.
3. National headquarter staff continues to recognize a chapter at Columbia University.
4. Regular recruitment activities throughout the semester.

E. Rescission of Recognition

In those cases where Residential Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life or the IGC Judicial Board recommends to the Dean of Undergraduate Student Life or their designee that a chapter loses its official recognition, the decision to rescind recognition requires administrative review and approval by the Dean of Undergraduate Student Life 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.

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 Undergraduate Student Life or their designee.

Recommendations for Rescission of Recognition can be made by any of the following: IGC Judicial Board, Associate Vice President for Student Conduct and Community Standards, Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Executive Director of Residential Life, Dean of Undergraduate Student Life 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 Life-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.

V. UNRECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

Unrecognized chapters or organizations are defined as organizations without provisional, probationary, or full recognition by Columbia University Residential Life-Fraternity & Sorority Life. These include chapters/organizations that have a university charter but were removed through a rescission of recognition, as well as organizations that have no university charter. Unrecognized chapters and organizations are not permitted affiliate themselves with the university, reserve space on campus, or participate in any council recruitment events or activities (i.e. Activities Day, NSOP Meet and Greet etc.).

VI. ADDITIONAL NOTES

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. At no time should the fraternity or sorority infer that its actions are in any way approved, sponsored or endorsed by Columbia. Violation of this section may result in rescission of recognition.
3. Residential Life- Fraternity & Sorority Life may adopt additional standards, operating principles and procedures outside of this document 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. Failure to do so may harm the recognition status of the overall chapter.