



Office of the Dean of Students

An open letter to students about Greek-letter Social Organizations...
January 2012

With the onset of Orientation, and as we get closer to the beginning of a new academic experience, we know that you will be having discussions with your family about coming to Geneseo. Besides worrying about your academics, we know that soon after arriving on campus you will be thinking about what to do on campus socially, and which of the 180+ clubs or activities to join. We also know that you will be faced with the choice of whether or not to participate in a Greek-letter social organization. We want you to have as much information as possible for making those choices. Thousands of alumni around the country have had positive experiences with fraternities and sororities, but there are also those whose experiences were not so positive. If you want information about the expectations of membership in a Greek-letter social organization or even what it means for a group to be recognized by Geneseo, please feel free to call our Greek advisor, Ms. Wendi Kinney, at (585) 245-5968, or me (Dean Sancilio) at (585) 245-5706, or go online to our website at <http://greeks.geneseo.edu>. To learn more about the recognized Greek-letter organizations from the students themselves, go to <http://go.geneseo.edu/greek>.

Recognized Greek Organizations

For the colleges and universities that now comprise the State University of New York, fraternities and sororities have existed since the early 1900's. Currently there are 21 Greek-letter social organizations that are recognized by Geneseo. Of the active groups, 3 fraternities and 4 sororities are national organizations (i.e., have other chapters throughout the United States); the other 14 are local chapters (i.e., are Geneseo-specific organizations). Two hundred eighty-six men (13% of the male student population) are involved with fraternities, 449 women (15% of the female student population) with sororities; and overall, approximately 14% of the student body are members of College-affiliated Greek-letter organizations. While Greeks are not disproportionately influential on campus, in terms of leadership positions or membership on teams, they are a very visible presence.

The Greek organizations are governed by a Statement of Relationship between the College and the Greeks, Greek constitutions, and the Student Code of Conduct, and Ms. Kinney advises them. This relationship statement formalized the expectations, rights and responsibilities of both the College and the organizations themselves, so that each group would know what was expected of it and what could be expected of the other. Greek-letter social organizations do not have College-sponsored housing on or off campus, but their official recognition by the College authorizes them to use campus facilities for their activities, to participate in social, recreational and intramural programs, and to work with other student organizations to sponsor campus events and programs. If members of these recognized groups choose to conduct their activities off campus, they do so without College supervision. If you have any questions about the recognition status of an organization, please contact Ms. Kinney or look at our website.

The recognized sororities are:

Alpha Delta Epsilon (AD), Alpha Kappa Phi (Ago), Alpha Omega Pi (AOPi), Sigma Gamma Phi (Arethusa), Delta Phi Epsilon (DPhiE), Phi Eta Psi (Pheta), Phi Kappa Pi (Clio), Phi Lambda Chi (Phi Lamb), Sigma Delta Tau (SDT), Sigma Kappa (Sigma Kappa), Sigma Psi Zeta (Sigma)

The recognized fraternities are:

Alpha Chi Rho (Crow), Delta Kappa Tau (DK), Lambda Alpha Upsilon (LAU), Omega Beta Psi (Omega), Phi Kappa Chi (Phi Kap), Phi Sigma Xi (Phigs) [suspended for Spring 2012 semester], Sigma Alpha Mu (SAM), Sigma Nu Chi (Sig Nu), Sigma Tau Psi (Sig Tau), Zeta Beta Xi (ZBXi)

What To Expect

Recruitment (rushing) is the act of gathering information/getting educated on the different recognized groups. First-year and new transfer students are allowed to 'rush' Greek-letter social organizations. Pledging is the official act of joining an organization. **Sororities and fraternities are not allowed to 'pledge,' or initiate freshmen during the student's first semester on campus. New transfer students may only join with prior written permission from me.** Our goal is to give new students at least one semester to adjust to the academic and social demands of college, specifically Geneseo, before becoming involved in fraternities and sororities. We want to give students the time to establish good study habits and time management skills, the opportunity to investigate and explore the many options for involvement in the life of the College, the space to find their own niche, and the freedom to begin to become more independent.

When To Be Concerned And What To Do

If you are involved in pledging/joining during your first semester on campus, or if you join without having the qualifying grades or credit hours, it means, an important College policy is being violated (which may subject you and them to campus disciplinary action).

Hazing is a concern when working with Greek-letter social organizations, as it is with many other types of groups. College policy defines hazing as any action taken or situation created intentionally, whether on or off campus, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization. If hazing occurs within a recognized organization, people and procedures are in place to address these issues should they be brought to our attention.

In addition to the mandatory workshops that we present and meetings that we hold, we have put together a *Hazing* brochure to educate the community about hazing. A copy of the brochure is included in your folder for you to read. If you suspect you are being hazed, or know of someone else who is being hazed, please seek assistance from me, Ms. Kinney, the Center for Community, a residence hall director, an intercollegiate athletic coach, University Police, or any other College official

You will have many choices to make regarding the direction of your Geneseo career. Educated decisions usually come after a period of investigation and discernment. There is a whole body of research regarding the benefits and drawbacks to participating in fraternal life as a college student. We all share the goal of academic and personal success for you and we strive to provide the highest quality campus environment that is conducive to that success. We are committed to maintaining a strong Greek life program with high standards for academic success, leadership development, responsible social activities, philanthropy, and service. If this is something that might be of interest to you, do your homework and educate yourself before making such an important decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leonard Sancilio Jr.".

Leonard Sancilio Jr., Ph.D.
Dean of Students

*Portions of this letter were adapted from a letter Dr. Steven Perry, VP for Student Development at SUNY Oneonta, provides to his students' parents.