



## Office of the Dean of Students

An open letter to parents about Greek-letter Social Organizations...  
Summer 2011

With the onset of Orientation, and as we get closer to the beginning of the new academic year - this one being at Geneseo - we know that you will be having discussions with your student about coming to college. We know that, soon after arriving on campus, your student will be thinking about what to do on campus socially, and which of the 180+ clubs or activities to join. We also know that your student will be faced with the choice of participating in Greek-letter social organizations. Our hope is that your family will 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) [suspended for Spring 2011 semester], Phi Kappa Chi (Phi Kap), Phi Sigma Xi (Phigs), 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 (or new transfer students) during the student's first semester on campus.** 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

1. If your student is involved in pledging/joining during their first semester on campus, or if they join without having the qualifying grades or credit hours, it means they are involved with a recognized group that is breaking College policy (unless they receive a waiver from me as Dean of Students to participate in pledging). Talk about it with your student and find out as much as you can about their understanding of the situation.

- If they are pledging a recognized group, remind them that an important policy is being violated (which may subject them and the group to campus disciplinary action). Determine whether it is acceptable to you or your student that they are involved with a group that disregards the rules.
  - Contact Ms. Kinney, or me, to inform us about rule infractions by recognized groups.
2. 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 it. A copy of the brochure is included in your packets for you to read. While reports of hazing at Geneseo are rare, it is the symptoms of hazing that are often the first signs to parents that their student is pledging.

Students will have many choices to make regarding the direction of their Geneseo careers. 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 our students 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 your student, make sure they do their homework and educate themselves before making such an important decision.

Sincerely,



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.