Recognition Standards for Fraternities and Sororities  
At the University of Southern California  
Established 1992

The university’s goal is to achieve a greek system representing real excellence in the student experience, a greek system which can be described as the best in the United States and which will bring significant credit to the university. Further, the university wants to see the system grow, providing expanded opportunities for individual students, and increased potential for students to achieve personal growth. Within this framework, membership in a fraternity or sorority is considered to be a privilege, not a right. With this privilege comes the responsibility to behave in a manner exemplifying the ideals of fraternities and sororities and to eliminate any behavior inconsistent with those goals of membership. In fact, self-policing on individual member and group behavior remains the primary expectation of USC for its recognized student organizations.

The following policies have been adopted by the University of Southern California to make clear the university’s expectations of behavior for those fraternal organizations with which it has entered into a relationship of mutual pride and respect. In return, USC can enthusiastically endorse those student organizations which meet these criteria for recognition as providing an important compliment to the undergraduate experience at the University of Southern California.

The following policies will serve as to extend the existing Relationship Statement (adopted in 1986) serving to define USC’s relationship with fraternities and sororities.

Policy 1.
All fraternities and sororities are required to achieve a chapter grade point average each semester which is at least two hundredths of a point (.02) above the all-undergraduate-student average for the prior comparable (fall or spring) semesters. Fraternities which fall below this level will follow a process which is similar to that of the university for academic disqualification, i.e., a semester of probation and a retention semester. The probation semester will include some restriction of privileges. Loss of recognition will follow failure to raise academic performance at the end of the retention semester. After falling below the established minimum, the organization must achieve a chapter grade point average above that minimum for two consecutive semesters in order to be removed from probation.

Policy 2.
In order to continue as an active member of a fraternity or sorority, a student must earn at least 12 hours of passing credit each semester which is applicable toward the student’s declared major or degree objective, and must earn an overall grade point average for each semester’s work of at least 2.2. Each chapter must have policies in place for assisting members who fall below this standard which should include the ability for the chapter to place restrictions on the member’s participation in the chapter and its activities. Failure to meet this standard by a member after three semesters should result in the termination of the member’s active status. Each chapter must have, whether through chapter vote, recommendation to national office, or other documented means, the ability to remove from active membership those who fail to make reasonable progress academically.

Individual circumstances (e.g., co-op semesters, internships or health problems) which prevent an individual from fulfilling these requirements will be evaluated and taken into consideration within the intent of the standard, which is to ensure that fraternities and sororities play a positive role in fostering the academic progress toward graduation of their members.
Policy 3.
Fraternities and sororities are required to notify the Office for Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development of their selection of a scholarship chairperson by the second week of each fall semester. The scholarship chair is required to attend all meetings of scholarship chairpersons, and serve as liaison to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development for purposes of providing accurate membership rosters, receiving chapter grade reports and establishing educational programs within the chapter which support policies 1 and 2.

Policy 4.
Every recognized fraternity and sorority must be in full compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Compliance requires an organization to adopt and implement a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol by students and employees. Organizations must also provide annual notification to members of the organization’s policies, including penalties for violation. Specific to this standard are:
1. There will be absolutely no possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs in the fraternity or sorority house or at any chapter sponsored event. Severe sanctions will be imposed on a chapter for violation of this provision by any member or guest of the chapter.
2. There will be no tolerance of alcohol abuse or underage drinking in any fraternity or sorority or at any chapter sponsored event. Non-alcoholic beverages will be served at any time at which alcoholic beverages are served. No member shall coerce or repeatedly encourage another member or a guest to drink alcoholic beverages, nor shall the consumption of alcohol be a criterion for membership or advancement within the chapter. No member shall drink to excess so as to become intoxicated or to lose his or her sense of responsibility to himself or herself or to others.
3. Chapter must structure policies for jointly sponsored events to give sororities primary responsibility for enforcing rules on underage drinking by sorority members, and fraternities primary responsibility for enforcing the same rules with fraternity members.

While this policy addresses certain minimums with respect to alcohol use, chapters are expected to establish environments where the responsible and moderate use of alcohol is observably better than minimum standards would require.

Policy 5.
All chapters are required to document annual education of all members, including new initiates, regarding the following:
   a. State law and university policy regarding alcohol, including Policy 4 above;
   b. The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act;
   c. Chapter policies regarding drugs and alcohol;
   d. State law, university policy, national and chapter policy regarding hazing;
   e. State law, university policy, national and chapter policy regarding sexual assault;
   f. The Principles of Community.

During the first semester after extending an invitation to membership (i.e., for most chapters the first semester of membership), prospective or new members must receive education regarding:
   a. Substance abuse;
   b. Sexual assault and sexual harassment;
   c. Study skills, including time management.

Policy 6.
All chapters are required to document annually the existence and functioning of an internal judicial system to enforce fraternity and sorority policies. Each organization must have the means to act quickly in disciplining a member, including the means to promptly and permanently expel a member from the chapter. Internal chapter judicial systems are still accountable to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards decisions and will be held accountable for action taken within that office.
Policy 7.
Formally organized parties by a fraternity or sorority may be held only between 3:00 p.m. Friday and 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Organized chapter activities held during the academic week (5:00 p.m. Sunday through 3:00 p.m. Friday) may not include formally organized parties held on or off campus. The intent is that events such as exchanges, invites, formals, and semi-formals be held on weekends. Generally, activities governed by this policy are characterized by one or more of the following:
   a. Alcohol is present,
   b. Amplified music by a DJ or live band is used, or
   c. The event lasts beyond 10:00 p.m.

This requirement is not intended to discourage events without alcohol which are supportive of:
   a. The academic mission (e.g., scholarship dinners, educational workshops);
   b. Community Service;
   c. Chapter development (e.g., alumni/ae or parent functions);
   d. Greek community development (e.g., dinner exchanges).

Additionally:
1. Chapters must share the financial obligations for co-sponsored events, including social events. A method for equitable sharing of the costs for co-sponsored events must be in place;
2. Chapters will be required to register all chapter-sponsored social events ten days prior to the event.
   a. It is recommended that parties with themes be reviewed in advance with the Office for Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Development in order to minimize the potential for offensive themes.
   b. The USC Department of Public Safety must receive notification of the event.

Policy 8.
Fraternities and sororities must establish and enforce quiet hours from 11:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Sunday evening through Friday morning, and from 12:01 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.Courtesy hours should be in effect 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Noise will be considered a disturbance if it can be heard inside any surrounding structure. Furthermore:
1. A “Community Agreement” form which describes these behavioral expectations must be signed annually by members; a member’s signature will acknowledge that the member has been informed of the expectations and has agreed to comply.
2. A “Notice to Neighbors” must be completed for each formal event planned; neighbors should be asked to contact the designated chapter representative and attempt resolution in the case of disturbance.

Policy 9.
Fraternities and sororities will provide 24 hour unannounced access to their premises to designated USC representatives for purposes of inspection. At the beginning of each academic year, a list from the Division of Student Affairs of those USC representatives to be accorded access will be provided to each chapter.

The circumstances under which the university expects to utilize its access relate to the safety and welfare of the students. Illustrative but not limiting examples of these circumstances would include periods of pre-initiation activities, time at which social events or other large gatherings are in progress, and occasions when assessments of health and safety conditions may be needed.

Chapters must inform the university at least ten days in advance of their desire to conduct formal secret rituals. Upon confirmation of such formal ritual periods by chapter advisors and national offices, the
university will abstain from visits except in cases of emergency. Monday night chapter meetings will be considered a private occasion and privacy will be provided in the chapter room while ritual is being held.

**Policy 10.**
Guests and visitors in fraternity and sorority houses and at chapter sponsored events shall be treated with the utmost respect and courtesy at all times. No such guest or visitor shall be assaulted, harassed, intimidated, degraded, threatened, coerced, or be made the butt of cruel or lascivious jokes, or be prevented from leaving at any time. The chapter shall be held responsible for the treatment of guests and visitors by its individual members.

Women/men are not allowed beyond the public areas of any fraternity/sorority until 8:00 a.m. the next morning on occasions when alcohol is being consumed at any fraternity/sorority activity whether or not the occasion is formally sponsored by the fraternity/sorority. In addition, no woman/man shall be permitted beyond the public areas of a fraternity/sorority if either the visitor or any host of that visitor shall have consumed more than two standard-sized drinks in the preceding four hour period.

**Policy 11.**
Neighbors of fraternities and sororities and passerby thereof shall be treated with the utmost respect and courtesy at all times. No such neighbors or passerby shall be assaulted, intimidated, harassed, degraded, threatened, or cursed, or be the target for objects thrown at them by chapter members or their guests, or be subjected to indecent exposure by chapter members or their guests. The chapter shall be held responsible for the treatment of neighbors and passerby by its members and guests.

**Policy 12.**
Each recognized fraternity or sorority must:

a. Comply with all fire regulations and requirements;
b. Comply with all safety and health codes;
c. Develop and regularly review a fire preparedness plan;
d. Develop and regularly review an earthquake preparedness plan;
e. Provide physical proof of 1 through 4 above on yearly basis through yearly official inspections by either USC Physical Plant, LA Fire Department, or LA Health and Safety Department;
f. Provide evidence of liability insurance;
g. Maintain its living area and yard in a way which clearly illustrates pride in appearance, cleanliness, and good repair.

**Policy 13.**
Each chapter must develop a “Code of Pride” regarding the appearance, cleanliness, and maintenance of its chapter house. This code with regard to external and internal maintenance of each chapter house must include:

a. Maintaining the physical plant itself in first-class condition (e.g., paint, plaster, doors, windows, hardware, heating equipment and appliances, roofs, shutters, etc.).
b. Maintaining the lawn and landscaping in first-class condition.
c. Daily removal of trash, garbage, food, soiled clothing, papers, athletic equipment, and miscellaneous junk from floors, halls, stairways, furniture, bathrooms, yards, and public areas.
d. Maintaining interior furnishings in first-class condition, including regular cleaning and repair of, and stain removal from, furniture, upholstery, carpeting, and drapes.
e. Maintaining appropriate exterior and interior lighting and physical security systems.
f. Maintaining an excellent educational environment, including desks, chairs, library, quiet hours, etc.
g. Maintaining high standards of cleanliness, especially in the kitchens, dining areas, bathrooms, and bedrooms.
In addition to unilateral inspections by the university, each chapter house will be inspected on a regular basis by a committee to review compliance with the Code of Pride. The committee will consist of the following:

- Order of Omega Representative
- IFC/Panhellenic Representative
- Chapter Presidents (in rotation)
- Office for Fraternity and Sorority Leadership staff member
- Physical Plant staff member

The committee shall have enforcement powers as follows:

1. Regular monitoring;
2. Warnings, with sufficient time to repair;
3. Citing to Student Conduct (Peer Review);
4. Recommendation to restrict privileges;
5. Recommendation to establish a chapter escrow account.

Such enforcement may be in addition to sanctions imposed as a result of unilateral inspection by the university.

**Policy 14.**

This policy exists to provide a formal mechanism for ensuring the implementation of policies 12 and 13. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all chapters are able to maintain their physical facilities in a clean and safe manner. When an unusual situation exists with the maintenance or safety the university reserves the right to direct the organization to correct the maintenance or safety problem. In unable to do so within a reasonable time, the university will move to have the maintenance or safety problem corrected. The university will forward documentation of all costs for said repair and/or clean-up to the organization. The organization will be expected to pay these costs within a reasonable and clearly communicated time.

Should the fraternity or sorority be unable to pay for the necessary clean up and/or repair, the university will discuss feasible solutions to the financial problems with the leaders of the chapter. If a solution cannot be identified by the chapter or this situation reoccurs for a particular chapter within a period of 24 months, the university will require the chapter to develop and maintain an escrow account to deal with future situations involving property maintenance or safety. The nature and amount of the escrow account will be established by the university in concert with the chapter leadership.

Sanctions for violations of these Policies shall be determined and imposed by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his or her designee. Such sanctions may include, but shall not be limited to: restriction of chapter’s social privileges, restriction on the participation of the chapter in various athletic, social, cultural, and artistic events; restrictions on the chapter’s participation in rush; required community service by the chapter; probation; suspension; and total withdrawal of recognition of the chapter by the university.

As a general rule, sanctions will not be imposed until the chapter has been granted a hearing before the Vice President for Student Affairs or his or her designee. However, in cases involving especially egregious infractions of these Policies, the Vice President may impose temporary sanctions prior to the hearing.

As a general rule, a chapter shall be responsible for the actions of its individual members. This rule may be waived, however, in those cases in which the offending member or members have been permanently expelled by the chapter.