



## UNANIMOUS AGREEMENTS

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Since 1902, the NPC member organizations have unanimously agreed to pursue certain procedures and ethics that lead to the orderly and equitable conduct of their mutual functions.

Unanimous Agreements are the principles, procedures and behavioral expectations considered so basic to ethical and harmonious intersorority life that they are binding on every NPC member organization. College and Alumnae Panhellenic Associations are required to operate according to these agreements, and all individual members must abide by them. Also included in the Unanimous Agreements are statements setting forth the rights of sororities as private, voluntary social organizations.

The Unanimous Agreements are adopted by a unanimous vote of the NPC voting body. As a further assurance that all 26 member organizations are truly unified in their decisions, the Unanimous Agreements are ratified by the inter/national president of each member organization. Her signature is her sorority's pledge that every collegiate and alumna member will abide by and honor the NPC Unanimous Agreements. They can be amended by a five-sixth vote of the board of directors.

Each College Panhellenic (or Inter-Sorority Council or equivalent organization) and Alumnae Panhellenic must incorporate the NPC Unanimous Agreements into its own procedures and operating methods (bylaws, standing rules, membership recruitment rules and other governing documents). Language that contradicts a Unanimous Agreement must be removed immediately; no vote is necessary.

NPC member organizations are formally named as fraternities, sororities or societies. For the purpose of the Unanimous Agreements, policies and best practices, NPC refers to all member organizations as sororities.

# UNANIMOUS AGREEMENTS

## I. THE PANHELLENIC CREED

We, as Undergraduate members of women's fraternities, stand for good scholarship, for guarding of good health, for maintenance of fine standards, and for serving, to the best of our ability, our college community. Cooperation for furthering fraternity life, in harmony with its best possibilities, is the ideal that shall guide our fraternity activities.

We, as Fraternity Women, stand for service through the development of character inspired by the close contact and deep friendship of individual fraternity and Panhellenic life. The opportunity for wide and wise human service, through mutual respect and helpfulness, is the tenet by which we strive to live.

## II. JURISDICTION OF PANHELLENIC ASSOCIATIONS

Panhellenic associations are based on democratic principles and organized to afford cooperation among the women's sororities. All chapters involved in the Panhellenic association, regardless of their membership class, must be women's-only organizations. Panhellenic members must respect and obey the letter and spirit of all NPC Unanimous Agreements. Panhellenic associations' governing documents must conform to all Unanimous Agreements.

### 1. College Panhellenic Associations

- i. The administrative body of a College Panhellenic Association is a College Panhellenic Council.
- A. A College Panhellenic Council shall be composed of delegates selected by individual chapters from the NPC sororities.
- B. A College Panhellenic Council shall take no action that infringes on the sovereignty, rights or privileges of the individual NPC sororities. Infringements include the following:
  - i. Requiring sorority chapters to maintain a specific scholastic grade point average
  - ii. Requiring a scholastic grade point average as a condition for a chapter's participation in membership recruitment
  - iii. Requiring a scholastic grade point average as a condition for a woman's participation in the membership recruitment process\*
  - iv. Requiring a scholastic grade point average as a qualification for pledging or initiation
  - v. Requiring sorority chapters to maintain a minimum number of members
  - vi. Surveying to collect data that reflects a chapter's internal information or requiring documents that are considered confidential material regarding the chapter's internal operations
  - vii. Lowering a chapter's quota as a penalty
  - viii. Requiring a chapter's Panhellenic delegate to be a specific chapter officer
  - ix. Enacting a College Panhellenic governing document provision or sanction that infringes on the sovereignty, rights or privileges of the individual NPC sororities
  - x. Voting to contradict an NPC Unanimous Agreement
- C. Language that infringes on the sovereignty, rights or privileges of the individual NPC sororities or that contradicts an NPC Unanimous Agreement must be removed immediately; no vote is necessary.
- D. Except in routine matters, a College Panhellenic Council and its officers shall act only upon a vote of the delegate body after referral to the member sorority chapters.

\* College Panhellenics that wish to highlight the importance of academics by communicating GPA standards for women participating in recruitment shall do so through educating potential new members, not through setting a minimum GPA. See the College Panhellenic Membership Recruitment section of this manual for specific suggestions.

2. Alumnae Panhellenic Associations
  - A. The administrative body of an Alumnae Panhellenic Association is an Alumnae Panhellenic Council.
  - B. Alumnae Panhellenic Councils shall be composed of delegates selected by their organized alumnae groups; an individual may represent her sorority where there is no alumnae group.
  - C. One vote shall be granted to each NPC member sorority represented in the Alumnae Panhellenic Association.
  - D. Alumnae Panhellenic Associations shall not expel a member organization of any NPC sorority from its membership in the Alumnae Panhellenic Association.
  - E. A re-established alumnae group shall take its place in rotation in the Alumnae Panhellenic Association according to the date of its re-establishment.

### III. THE PANHELLENIC COMPACT

1. A woman who is or who has ever been an initiated member of an existing NPC sorority shall not be eligible for membership in another NPC sorority.
2. To be eligible to participate in Panhellenic recruitment and pledge an NPC sorority as a collegiate member, a woman must:
  - A. Not be simultaneously enrolled in high school and attending college.
  - B. Be an undergraduate regularly matriculated according to the definition of matriculation established by that institution.
3. An undergraduate woman may pledge an NPC sorority only during a regular academic term and not during any school recess or summer academic term except during a primary membership recruitment period and the ensuing continuous open bidding (COB) process when held immediately before an academic term.
4. Each College Panhellenic Council shall establish a Bid Day to conclude the primary membership recruitment period. A Bid Day is the scheduled time when invitations to membership are issued.
5. If through the primary membership recruitment process, a potential new member receives a bid and declines it, then she is ineligible to be pledged to another NPC sorority on the same campus until the beginning of the next year's primary membership recruitment period.
6. At a later date but before the next primary membership recruitment period, if the potential new member who declined her bid expresses interest in being pledged to the chapter with which she originally matched, she may do so only if the chapter extends another bid and has quota or total spaces to fill.
7. If a potential new member does not receive a bid at the end of the primary membership recruitment period, she is eligible immediately to participate in COB.
8. If through the primary membership recruitment process a potential new member accepts a bid and then has her pledge broken by an NPC sorority or breaks her pledge, then she is ineligible to be pledged to another NPC sorority on the same campus until the beginning of the next year's primary membership recruitment period.
9. A COB acceptance is a binding agreement. If a potential new member accepts a bid, then signs a COB acceptance or goes through the member organization's official pledging ceremony and has her pledge broken by an NPC sorority or breaks her pledge, then she is ineligible to be pledged to another NPC sorority on that campus until the beginning of the next primary membership recruitment period.
10. A woman who has accepted a bid either through primary or COB membership recruitment and who has had her pledge broken by an NPC sorority or has broken her pledge, may be repledged by the same NPC sorority chapter on the campus at any time before the beginning of the next year's primary membership recruitment period, even if the chapter is over total.
11. When a woman who has been pledged but not yet initiated transfers to another campus, her pledge is broken, and she is eligible to pledge an NPC sorority on that campus at the earliest opportunity.

12. Women who have been pledged but not yet initiated into a chapter whose charter has been rescinded or relinquished or if a colony that has been dissolved shall be eligible to pledge another NPC sorority immediately following the official release by the NPC sorority.

#### IV. STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

1. National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sororities shall impress upon their undergraduate and alumnae members that they shall respect and obey the letter and the spirit of all NPC Unanimous Agreements.
2. In case of Panhellenic difficulties, all chapters involved shall do their utmost to restore harmony and to prevent publicity, both in the college and the community.
3. NPC denounces the arbitrary priority rating of women's sororities.
4. NPC denounces the ranking or categorization of chapters determined by administrative personnel, according to a chapter's compliance with university standards or guidelines.
5. NPC sorority members shall not suggest to any potential new member that she refuse a bid from one organization in order to wait for a bid from another organization or suggest that a potential member list only one choice on her membership recruitment acceptance binding agreement (MRABA).
6. It is in accord with the dignity and good manners of sorority women to:
  - A. Avoid disparaging remarks about any sorority or college woman.
  - B. Create friendly relations between sorority and nonsorority women.
  - C. Avoid negative publicity on Panhellenic matters.
7. NPC discourages the use of Greek-letter sorority names and insignia in inappropriate or distasteful commercial advertising.
8. NPC has no affiliation or connection with any high school sorority.
9. NPC supports all efforts to eliminate hazing.

#### V. AGREEMENT ON EXTENSION

1. NPC believes that it is unethical for an NPC sorority to contact an institution and/or its students concerning the establishment of a chapter where the institution fails to meet the NPC requirements for a host institution. The institution must be a senior college or university that is authorized to confer a bachelor's degree and that has received a satisfactory rating by the pertinent recognized regional association of colleges and secondary schools or other recognized agency and/or entity that confers accreditation in the relevant jurisdiction.
2. The proper authority shall be defined as follows:
  - A. Where there are two or more NPC sororities present on campus, then a vote of those NPC sororities as evidenced in written minutes of the College Panhellenic Council (if organized) shall constitute the proper authority. If there is no College Panhellenic Council, then a separate vote of the NPC chapters present on campus shall constitute the proper authority.
  - B. On campuses where there is one or no NPC sorority and where the administration is willing to recognize women's sororities, a letter from a senior-level student affairs administrator shall constitute the proper authority.
  - C. The NPC Extension Committee is the proper authority on campuses where there is one or no NPC sorority and the college administration does not grant recognition to women's sororities but does not discipline students for joining.
3. Contact regarding extension by NPC sororities, volunteers, staff, collegiate and alumnae members shall include the following:
  - A. NPC sororities may contact the administration of any college or university that meets the criteria listed in Unanimous Agreement V, No. 1 and serves as the proper authority.

- B. When a campus has two or more NPC sororities and is open for extension, NPC sororities can communicate with a student(s), an interest group or a local sorority only with prior permission of the proper authority.
  - C. NPC sororities that are contacted by student(s), local sororities or interest groups from campuses with two or more NPC sororities must refer the student(s), local sorority or interest group to the proper authority.
  - D. NPC sororities should not be in contact with students of any college or university concerning membership where the administration disciplines students for joining women's sororities.
  - E. When a local sorority or interest group is in discussions with an NPC sorority regarding affiliation after approval by the proper authority, no other group shall be in communication with that local sorority or interest group.
4. Any colony of an NPC sorority shall become a provisional member of the College Panhellenic Association and shall conform to the association's established rules, regulations and policies.
  5. When an NPC sorority has installed a chapter, that chapter shall become a regular member of the College Panhellenic Association.

## VI. COLLEGE PANHELLENIC ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

1. Establishment and Regulation of a College Panhellenic Association
  - A. A College Panhellenic Association shall be established where two or more NPC sororities have installed undergraduate chapters.
  - B. The NPC sorority chapter first installed on that campus shall take the initiative in organizing the College Panhellenic Association with the participation and involvement of other existing NPC sorority chapters on that campus.
  - C. When an NPC member sorority has followed the NPC Agreement on Extension (UA V), and a chapter has been installed, that chapter shall become a regular member of the College Panhellenic Association.
  - D. Each installed NPC sorority chapter shall have one vote.
  - E. A College Panhellenic Association shall conduct business only during the regular academic year and primary recruitment if held outside of the regular academic term.
  - F. A College Panhellenic Association shall not expel a chapter of any NPC sorority from its membership, nor shall it have the authority to recommend such action.
  - G. An NPC sorority chapter shall not have the right to withdraw from its College Panhellenic Association.
  - H. A re-established NPC sorority chapter shall take its place in the College Panhellenic Association according to the date of its most recent installation.
2. Establishment and Regulation of Membership Recruitment
  - A. Each College Panhellenic Council shall establish rules governing membership recruitment activities.
  - B. Each NPC sorority chapter has the right to use continuous open bidding (COB) to reach quota or its total allowable chapter size during the regular school year as defined by the school calendar. To accommodate a chapter colonization or to allow a chapter to build its membership, the College Panhellenic Council may vote to suspend COB for a period not to exceed three weeks.
  - C. Each College Panhellenic Association shall prohibit the use of alcoholic beverages in membership recruitment and Bid Day activities.
  - D. Each College Panhellenic Association shall prohibit the participation of men in membership recruitment and Bid Day activities.
  - E. All members, including alumnae and new members, shall be bound by College Panhellenic Association rules governing membership recruitment.
  - F. Regardless of recruitment style, a potential new member shall sign a binding membership agreement.

### 3. Preferential Bidding

When a preferential bidding system is used, the College Panhellenic Association shall observe the following:

- A. When a woman receives a bid under the preferential system, her signing the membership acceptance is binding to the extent that she shall be considered ineligible until the next primary recruitment to accept a bid from any other NPC sorority on the same campus. However, she may be repledged by the same NPC sorority chapter at any time prior to the next primary recruitment.
- B. The person in charge of preferential bidding shall be required to safeguard all records and keep them for one year from the date of signing.

### 4. Continuous Open Bidding (COB)

- A. During COB, the proof of a woman's membership acceptance shall be a dated COB acceptance signed by the woman and witnessed by a member of the NPC sorority chapter.
- B. The person in charge of record keeping shall be required to safeguard all COB records and keep them for one year from the date of signing.

## VII. COLLEGE PANHELLENIC ASSOCIATION JUDICIAL PROCEDURE

### 1. Judicial Board

Each College Panhellenic Association shall establish a judicial board for the limited purpose of handling member organization infractions of:

- NPC Unanimous Agreements
  - College Panhellenic bylaws and/or other governing documents
  - College Panhellenic membership recruitment rules/guidelines
  - College Panhellenic code of ethics
  - College Panhellenic standing rules
- A. The composition and duties of the judicial board must be defined in the College Panhellenic bylaws. All members of the judicial board must be collegians from the College Panhellenics' member organizations.
  - B. NPC does not recognize a judicial board that includes male members.
  - C. A College Panhellenic, through its officers, shall select and train a workable judicial board based on campus needs.
  - D. The duties and responsibilities of the judicial board must be consistent with this and all other NPC Unanimous Agreements.
  - E. All NPC judicial forms shall be used to ensure proper documentation and adherence to the NPC Unanimous Agreements. Judicial forms are available on the NPC website.
  - F. Documentation of all judicial proceedings shall be retained by the fraternity/sorority advisor for three years.

### 2. Judicial Process Overview

- A. Sororities are encouraged to resolve alleged infractions as soon as possible through informal discussion with the involved parties before an infraction is filed.
- B. Should the informal discussions be unsuccessful, the judicial process will be set in motion by the filing of a violation report form for an alleged infraction. An infraction can only be filed against a chapter and not against any individuals. Violations must be reported in the following manner on the College Panhellenic Violation Report available on the NPC website or from the College Panhellenic:
- C. Timing
  - The College Panhellenic Violation Report shall be completed and presented to the president of the College Panhellenic Association in a timely manner, but not more than 30 calendar days from the date of the alleged infraction (including university/college breaks).



- If the College Panhellenic president is unavailable or the violation is against her sorority, the report shall be presented to the fraternity/sorority advisor.
  - The College Panhellenic president and fraternity/sorority advisor shall review the College Panhellenic Violation Report to ensure that it has been filled out completely, including proper signatures and indication of rules/guidelines violated. An incomplete report shall be returned to the reporting party for completion before proceeding.
- D. Proper Reporting Authority
- i. Infractions, excluding recruitment infractions, may only be reported and signed by one of these people:
    - Chapter president on behalf of her chapter
    - Chapter executive officer/board member on behalf of her chapter
    - College Panhellenic officer
    - Fraternity/sorority advisor
  - ii. Recruitment infractions may only be reported and signed by one of these people:
    - Chapter president on behalf of her chapter
    - College Panhellenic officer in charge of recruitment or a recruitment counselor
    - Potential new member
    - Fraternity/sorority advisor
- E. Receipt of Infraction
- The following steps should be taken to make certain an infraction is properly received by the College Panhellenic:
    - » The College Panhellenic Violation Report is retained by the College Panhellenic president or fraternity/sorority advisor and is available upon request by the accused sorority.
    - » The College Panhellenic president or fraternity/sorority advisor shall send a copy of the College Panhellenic Violation Report to the NPC area advisor within seven days.
- F. Notification of Chapter
- The College Panhellenic president shall notify the accused sorority in writing by delivering the College Panhellenic Infraction Notice to that chapter president within seven days of receiving the College Panhellenic Violation Report.
  - If the president of the accused sorority is unavailable, delivery may be made to another appropriate chapter sorority officer or advisor. The record of delivery shall be documented on the report.
  - A copy of the College Panhellenic Infraction Notice shall be given to the fraternity/sorority advisor and sent to the NPC area advisor within the same time period.
- G. Response to Receipt of Infraction
- Upon receipt of the College Panhellenic Infraction Notice, the accused sorority shall contact the College Panhellenic president within seven days to schedule mediation.
  - Mediation shall be held unless the accused sorority chooses to proceed directly to a judicial hearing.
  - If the College Panhellenic Infraction Notice is delivered during a college/university break, the mediation/judicial hearing may be scheduled after classes resume or held during the break if all parties are available.

### 3. Mediation

The purpose of mediation is to find a solution satisfactory to both the party who filed the infraction and the accused sorority, in accordance with the following documents:

- NPC Unanimous Agreements
- College Panhellenic bylaws
- College Panhellenic membership recruitment rules/guidelines
- College Panhellenic code of ethics
- College Panhellenic standing rules

The following elements of mediation shall be followed:

- Mediation shall be closed to the public.
- All participants in the mediation shall keep strict confidentiality.
- No more than three participants (including a chapter advisor) shall represent either party and/or each sorority involved at mediation.
- In cases of infractions for which a College Panhellenic officer or another individual has information regarding the infraction and did not file the infraction, then the person shall attend only for the purpose of presenting the information, after which he or she shall be excused from the mediation.

Mediator Guidelines:

- The College Panhellenic president in agreement with the fraternity/sorority advisor shall appoint a neutral party to serve as the mediator.
- Though it is preferable that the fraternity/sorority advisor for Panhellenic not serve as the mediator, the advisor can serve if he or she did not file the infraction or has not been involved with the reported incident.
- The mediator shall not be an undergraduate student.
- All parties must sign a summary of the mediation proceedings on the Mediation Summary Report indicating the outcome of the mediation and their acceptance of the sanctions. The forms are available on the NPC website. A copy of the report shall be retained by the fraternity/sorority advisor for a period of three years.
- Within 24 hours of the completion of the mediation, the College Panhellenic president shall send a copy of the Mediation Summary Report to the parties designated on the form.

#### 4. Judicial Board Hearing

- If an agreement is not reached during the mediation process, a judicial board hearing shall be held.
- The accused party may choose to go directly to a judicial board hearing instead of mediation.
- **The College Panhellenic shall follow procedures for judicial board hearings as already established by its College Panhellenic Association bylaws.**
- Hearings shall be closed to the public.
- No more than three participants (including a chapter advisor) shall represent either party and/or each sorority involved at a hearing.
- In cases of infractions for which a College Panhellenic officer or another individual has information regarding the infraction and did not file the infraction, then the person shall attend only for the purpose of presenting the information, after which he or she shall be excused from the judicial hearing.
- All parties must sign a summary of the hearing proceedings on the Judicial Board Hearing Summary Report indicating the outcome of the hearing. Forms are available on the NPC website. A copy of the report should be retained by the fraternity/sorority advisor for three years.
- Within 24 hours of the completion of the judicial hearing, the College Panhellenic officer responsible for the judicial process shall send a copy of the College Panhellenic Judicial Board Hearing Summary Report to the parties designated on the form.
- On those campuses where the small size of the College Panhellenic makes a judicial board hearing ineffective because of conflicts of interest, and mediation has proved ineffective, the case may be referred directly to the NPC College Panhellenics Judicial Appeals Committee.

#### 5. Sanctions

- A. Appropriate Sanctions. Each College Panhellenic shall strive to achieve a fair and reasonable resolution for infractions. Sanctions should fit the nature and degree of the offense.
- Monetary fines shall be acceptable only for a measurable offense of the Panhellenic's governing documents or stated membership recruitment rules.



- The amounts of monetary fines shall be predetermined by a vote of the College Panhellenic Council and stated in the Panhellenic standing rules and/or membership recruitment rules prior to the beginning of recruitment.
- Examples of reasons for monetary fines may be limited to:
  - » Late recruitment event invitation lists
  - » Recruitment events that exceed designated event times
  - » Prohibited postings on social media outlets
  - » Lack of required chapter attendance at Panhellenic-sponsored events

Sanctions shall not:

- Forbid formal or informal recruitment activities or the observance of an inter/national sorority event such as an educational program, ritual ceremony or historical celebration.
- Affect a sorority chapter's quota or total.
- Affect the time of new member acceptance and/or initiation.
- Forbid the right of an NPC sorority to vote in College Panhellenic meetings.
- Include removal from the College Panhellenic.

**B. Duration of Sanctions**

The duration of any penalty imposed shall not exceed one calendar year from the time the decision is final.

**C. NPC Notification of Sanctions**

Within 24 hours of the completion of mediation or the judicial board hearing, the College Panhellenic president or the College Panhellenic officer responsible for the judicial process shall send a copy of the Mediation Summary Report or Judicial Board Hearing Summary Report (not including the minutes) to parties indicated on the report form.

**6. Appeals**

**A. The decision of the College Panhellenic Association judicial board may be appealed by any involved party to the NPC College Panhellenics Judicial Appeals Committee.**

- An appeal shall be filed with the College Panhellenic president, using the process referenced in the judicial resource section in the Manual of Information and on the appeal form, within seven days of the decision.
- The Judicial Appeals Committee shall reverse or uphold the decision of the College Panhellenic Association judicial board. The Judicial Appeals Committee may also dismiss or modify sanctions as the committee deems appropriate.
- Any penalty shall begin only after all properly filed appeal decisions have been rendered. If a sanctioned sorority wants to fulfill all or part of the sanctions pending the outcome of a filed appeal, the sorority shall have that option.

**B. If the NPC College Panhellenics Judicial Appeals Committee is unable to resolve the appeal, the Judicial Appeals Committee chairman shall be responsible for the further conduct of the case. All data regarding the appeal shall be submitted in the following order, as needed, until resolution can be determined:**

- Inter/national presidents of the sorority(s) involved
- NPC Executive Committee
- NPC Board of Directors; the decision of the board shall be final

**VIII. AGREEMENT ON QUESTIONNAIRES**

Questionnaires, oral and written, shall not be answered until they have been reviewed by the NPC office staff and research subject matter experts. The necessary information will then be released to the member organizations to provide a coordinated response that protects individual and group freedom of association and the right to privacy.



## **IX. NPC DECLARATION OF FREEDOM**

Knowledge is essential to preserving the freedoms provided in the first 10 amendments of the U. S. Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, and as provided by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part 1, Constitution Act, 1982), known as the Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms.

Citizens of both the United States and Canada are guaranteed the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association. NPC is dedicated to preserving the freedom of citizens to choose their associates.

We, the members of the National Panhellenic Conference, agree that we have a responsibility to contribute to accurate and thorough knowledge of the freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and of any forces, organizations and ideologies that are potentially destructive to these freedoms.

## **X. PROTECTING THE RIGHT OF NPC MEMBERS TO REMAIN WOMEN-ONLY ORGANIZATIONS**

NPC member groups exist as women-only private social organizations. We believe that the right to enforce such membership restrictions is rooted in the freedom of association protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Congress has recognized that right by providing in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that social fraternities and sororities are exempt from the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sex in participation in educational programs or related activities (20 USC 1681) and in exempting “bona fide private membership clubs” from the general prohibition against sex discrimination in employment practice (26 USC 501(c)). To further protect the right to maintain our membership policies, NPC reaffirms its long-held beliefs and policies in the form of a Unanimous Agreement.

1. The women’s sororities of the National Panhellenic Conference have the right to confine their membership to women and shall defend their right to exist as single-sex organizations.
2. Auxiliaries. Each College Panhellenic shall denounce the participation of undergraduate Panhellenic women in auxiliary groups to men’s fraternities.
3. Men’s Recruitment. Each College Panhellenic shall denounce the participation of Panhellenic women in men’s fraternity events when or where the primary purpose is recruitment.

*Please note that certain Unanimous Agreements that pertain to College Panhellenics are further outlined and explained in the Resolved to Educate resource documents provided on the NPC website in the “For Advisors” section.*