

Glossary of fraternity/sorority terms

Active – a member of a Greek organization who is currently enrolled as an undergraduate student.

Alumna (pl. alumnae) – a sorority member who is no longer an undergraduate student. Sometimes called a “graduate” member.

Alumnus (pl. alumni) – a fraternity members who is no longer an undergraduate student. Sometimes called a “graduate” member.

Bid – an invitation to join a fraternity or sorority.

Bid Day – the final day of a recruitment period when bids are distributed.

Bid Matching – a system for matching the choice of a potential new member with the choice of a chapter.

Brother – an initiated or new/associate member of a fraternity.

Chapter – the campus group of a national organization. Within each organization, chapters are usually referenced via a Greek-letter designation. For example, the founding chapter would be the “Alpha Chapter” and the second is typically the “Beta Chapter”, and so on.

Chapter Advisor – an alumna/alumnus who establishes and maintains a close advisory relationship with a chapter and serves as a teacher, counselor, and friend.

College Panhellenic Association – the cooperative campus organization of collegiate members of the National Panhellenic Conference sororities (“Panhellenic”).

Colony – a fraternity or sorority with provisional recognition status and in the final stage prior to being installed as a recognized, chartered chapter of the organization.

Continuous Open Bidding (COB) – a term used by Panhellenic sororities, COB is an open recruitment period with no structured and scheduled community-wide activities. Bids may be extended and accepted at any time. At Wittenberg fall recruitment is considered COB, as is recruitment following Bid Day in the spring.

Dry Recruitment – alcohol is strictly prohibited from all events associated with introducing any sorority/fraternity to potential new members as well as newly-joined members.

Formal Recruitment – the official selection period of the year with structured, scheduled events. On many campuses, the most concentrated period with Formal Recruitment for entertaining and selecting new members is known as Recruitment Week. At Wittenberg this takes place at the beginning of the spring semester.

Fraternity – an individual Greek-letter organization. This is a term commonly used to distinguish between men’s organizations (fraternities) and women’s organizations (sororities). Some sororities are formally known as “women’s fraternities.”

Greeks – students affiliated with fraternities and sororities.

Hazing – any willful act or practice by a member or associate member, directed against a member or new/associate member, which, with or without intent, has the potential to: cause bodily harm or danger, offensive punishment, or disturbing pain; compromise the person’s dignity; cause embarrassment or shame in public; cause the person to be the object of malicious amusement or ridicule; cause psychological harm or substantial emotional strain; and/or impair academic efforts. In addition, hazing includes any requirement to participate in any activity which is illegal, in contrary to a member’s or new/associate member’s moral or religious beliefs, or is contrary to the rules and regulations of the organization, institution of learning, and civil authorities.

Inactive Member – an individual who is still a member of the organization but is denoted as inactive to designate that they have disassociated, taken a leave of absence, and no longer participate in the day-to-day activities of the chapter. This status usually has a time limit of one academic year or less. This is not the same as a graduate/alumni member or a resigned/terminated member.

Initiation – a formal ceremony by which new members become initiate members.

Intentional Single Preference (ISP) – a term used by Panhellenic sororities. ISP is when a potential member lists only one sorority on their Membership Recruitment Acceptance Binding Agreement (MRABA) when there is more than one option to list.

Interfraternity Council (IFC) – the governing council made up of all fraternities on campus.

Legacy – the child, grandchild, sibling (or in some cases stepchild, step-grandchild or step-sibling) of an initiated member. Each organization has a different legacy definition and policy.

Manual of Information (MOI or “Greenbook”) – Handbook containing historical, procedural, instructional, philosophical, and practical information about the National Panhellenic Conference and College and Alumnae Panhellenic Associations.

Membership Recruitment Acceptance Binding Agreement (MRABA) – a one-year binding agreement that a Potential New Member makes with the College Panhellenic Association on Preference Night during Formal Recruitment. By signing a MRABA, the PNM states they will accept a bid into any sorority listed on the agreement.

New Member – a member of a fraternity/sorority who is not yet an initiated/active member. Sometimes called “pledge member” or “associate member” depending on the organization’s terms.

New Member Depledging – the termination of a new member’s relationship with a chapter prior to initiation.

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) – a conference body composed of delegates from 26 sororities/women’s fraternities. All sororities at Wittenberg are members of the NPC.

National Panhellenic Conference Area Advisor – a delegate or alternate of one of the 26 NPC organizations who serves as a resource to the college and alumnae Panhellenics in a proximal area.

North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) – a trade association made up of several national fraternities. Most fraternities at Wittenberg are members of the NIC.

Philanthropy – an active effort, project or service to promote human welfare or the raising of funds to be donated for that purpose.

Pinning – ceremony that designates the start of a new member process. The New Member often wears a pin or emblem and at the moment of pinning, officially becoming a new member.

Potential/Prospective New Member (PNM) – a non-member who is eligible to participate in the recruitment process.

Quota – the number each National Panhellenic Conference sorority may pledge on campus during formal recruitment.

Recommendation/Reference – a written letter or statement endorsing a student for membership.

Recruitment – a series of events offering initiated members and potential new members the opportunity to get acquainted with one another.

Release Figures – a term used by Panhellenic sororities, this is a process to manage the number of invitations issued by each chapter participating in formal recruitment.

Rho Gamma – a term used by Panhellenic sororities, this is a recruitment counselor. A neutral representative of Panhellenic who temporarily disassociates from the sorority to impartially guide and support potential members through the recruitment process.

Snap Bidding – a term used by Panhellenic sororities, this is an option available to chapters that did not fill Quota during formal recruitment. Chapters may offer bids to potential members whose preferences were not matched. This process takes place before bids are distributed. Snap Bidding is not the same as COB and is not intended to fill spaces in the chapter Total; it is limited to students who participated in the formal sorority recruitment process.

Sorority – an individual Greek-letter organization. This is a term commonly used to distinguish between men’s organizations (fraternities) and women’s organizations (sororities). Some sororities are formally known as “women’s fraternities.”

Total – a term used by Panhellenic sororities, this is the allowable chapter size, including both the new and initiated members, as determined by the College Panhellenic. Total at Wittenberg is determined once in the fall and once in the spring and is based on median chapter size.

Unanimous Agreements – agreements to which the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) member groups have unanimously agreed and that lead to orderly and equitable conduct of their mutual functions. Unanimous Agreements are binding on all NPC organizations.