



ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE:
A RESOURCE FOR
COLLEGE PANHELLENICS



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INTRODUCTION

The National Panhellenic Conference developed this resource for College Panhellenics as a tool for helping sorority women fulfill their academic potential and live up to the scholastic ideal stated in 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.”

Through effective programming and recognition, a College Panhellenic can establish a culture within the fraternity/sorority community that demonstrates a sincere commitment to academic excellence. The scholarship officer is a vital part of the Panhellenic leadership team. A College Panhellenic must make the scholarship officer and her committee an important and integral part of its programming.

Educating sorority women on the academic goals of Panhellenic will result in success for individual members and their chapters and create positive public relations in the greater campus community.

A College Panhellenic’s scholarship program should not replace a chapter’s academic programming. Instead, College Panhellenic academic initiatives should complement what chapters do with broader programming that will be beneficial to all members.

Use this resource to implement an effective program on your campus. Select the items that best meet the needs of your members. Be creative and tailor the program to your chapters, your Panhellenic community and your campus. We wish you great success.



NPC POSITIONS AND POLICIES ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

NPC has adopted the following standards, Unanimous Agreements and best practices to support its commitment to scholarship while preserving the autonomy of its member organizations:

NPC Standards

I: Positively affecting intellectual development

Each member organization places high value on education, academic performance and intellectual development.

Minimum chapter standards:

- Meet or exceed the campus all-women's grade point average.
- Provide academic programming to new members and initiated members, such as recognizing scholastic achievement and promoting academic success resources.
- Prioritizing programming with student learning objectives and offer a balanced calendar that honors a member's primary focus as a student.
- Develop positive relationships with university faculty members.
- Recruit women in good academic standing.

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 National Panhellenic Conference Unanimous Agreements. Panhellenic associations' governing documents must conform to all Unanimous Agreements.

1. College Panhellenic Associations

- A. The administrative body of a College Panhellenic Association is a College Panhellenic Council.
- B. A College Panhellenic Council shall be composed of delegates selected by individual chapters from the NPC sororities.
- C. 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



- D. 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.*
- E. 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 the NPC Manual of Information for specific suggestions.

Best Practices

Academic Excellence (1989, 1995)

Reaffirmation that College Panhellenics be dedicated to academic excellence, strive to achieve the highest possible GPA and present a yearly program on promotion of study skills.

Education (8th Ed.)

Emphasis on sorority education during the new member period, and reduction of pressure toward over participation in campus activities and attendance at social affairs to ensure the best possible adjustment on the part of the new member.

Scholarship (8th Ed.) – BEST PRACTICE

Assistance should be given to new members in their academic adjustment, and all members are encouraged to strive for high scholastic achievement. NPC sororities accept the responsibility to aid individual members in attaining high scholarly achievement.

Month of the Scholar (2000, 2010)

This important NPC initiative promotes academic excellence and achievement in February.



NPC ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

Academic Honor Roll

Each school year, NPC recognizes College Panhellenics that exceed the all-women's average on their respective campuses based on the reports the College Panhellenics submit to the NPC Office. Reporting opportunities are available every term from the NPC office. Email NPCCentral@npcwomen.org for more information.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS OF COLLEGE PANHELLENIC ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

- Make academic programming an integral part of the Panhellenic master calendar that is available to all community members.
- Select an enthusiastic Panhellenic scholarship officer who is a good academic role model.
- Meet regularly with the chapter scholarship officers to determine an effective strategy to support Panhellenic women in their academic achievement.
- Evaluate previous academic programming for effectiveness as you plan future events and initiatives.
- Compare the all-sorority average with the all-women's average at your campus for the past two years to identify trends.
- Develop a comprehensive scholarship plan for promoting academic excellence within the fraternity/sorority community that communicates Panhellenic's commitment to intellectual development in the campus community.
- Establish realistic and measurable goals for scholarship programming.
- Develop meaningful ways to recognize the outstanding academic achievements of individuals and chapters.



ROLE OF THE PANHELLENIC EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Guard against over programming, especially during midterms and seven to 10 days before final exams.
- Serve as role models concerning academic attitudes and academic achievement in the fraternity/sorority community.
- Recruit administration and faculty advocates for the fraternity/sorority community.
- Promote the academic success of the Panhellenic community to the greater campus community.

ROLE OF THE PANHELLENIC SCHOLARSHIP OFFICER

Include these duties (as relevant to your campus) in the scholarship officer's list of responsibilities as stated in your Panhellenic bylaws:

- Create a climate in which there is a constant presence and appreciation of academic excellence.
- Ensure the all-sorority average is well above the all-women's average.
- Chair the Academic Excellence Committee composed of chapter scholarship officers.
- Establish academic goals for the College Panhellenic Association in consultation with the Panhellenic Academic Excellence Committee.
- Build strong faculty relationships and implement faculty appreciation programs.
- Recognize Panhellenic scholars and outstanding and/or improved academic performance.
- Submit academic reports to NPC each academic term.
- Assist chapters in recruiting chapter faculty advisors.



- Keep chapters informed of institutional academic deadlines and applications for scholarships, study abroad opportunities, internships, graduate school resource events, research opportunities and honor societies.
- Plan (in conjunction with other Panhellenic officers or the Panhellenic delegates) workshops to promote time management, class attendance and the transition to college-level work as well as study skills such as listening, time management, writing, reading and test-taking.
- Encourage chapters to develop academic peer mentors within their chapters. These members will meet periodically with members who have similar interests, majors and career goals and offer advice about classes and other academic information. If chapters are enthusiastic about this idea, it could expand to a Panhellenic academic mentor program.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMMING IDEAS

- Invite chapter scholarship officers to meet and share ideas.
- Ask chapters above the all-women's average or all-sorority/fraternity average to describe their most effective programs.
- Pair chapters in teams to compete for an incentive (determined by your council).
- Have chapters/councils discuss what they could do to improve by .1 or more from one term to the next. Reward chapters that improve .1 or more after taking the challenge.

SAMPLE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE ITEMS

Items to do each term:

- Evaluate any previous scholarship programming: Did people like it? Was it effective and well attended? What changes need to be made?
- Discuss goals for the term.



- Set the date for the scholarship recognition event and begin planning.
- Complete the Academic Achievement report (online at npcwomen.org) as soon as grades are available for the previous term.
- Strategize ways to recruit scholars.
- Brainstorm ways to obtain positive PR from Panhellenic scholarship or by showcasing exemplary Panhellenic scholars in the areas of academic achievement, study abroad, research and post-graduate plans.
- Plan motivational program for finals.
- Plan a surprise appreciation for the Academic Excellence Committee.
- Recognize outstanding graduating seniors.
- Discuss ways to show faculty appreciation.
- Publicize honor societies, scholarships, internships, grants and special programs.

Items to do once a year:

- Begin detailed planning for February Month of the Scholar celebration, which includes events, recognition, possible workshops or attendance at cultural events (e.g., plays and other performances, lectures, art exhibits, historical places in your town) and faculty appreciation.
- Have transition meeting with new scholarship officer.
- Discuss the scholarship budget and work with the Panhellenic treasurer to set a final amount.
- Review campus policies related to academics and sorority members (if applicable).
- Give the campus master academic calendar to the Academic Excellence Committee.



COLLEGE PANHELLENIC ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Be sure to include these dates on academic calendars your Panhellenic provides to its member organizations:

- Date classes begin and end
- Last day to register without a penalty
- Last day to drop/add a class
- Last day to apply for graduation
- Campus holidays, religious holidays and vacation periods
- Reading days
- Final exam periods
- Last day to withdraw from classes without an academic grade
- Last day to remove incompletes from the previous term
- Commencement
- All major campus events (e.g., football games, homecoming, Parents Weekend, Greek Weekend, other important dates that affect the entire fraternity/sorority community)

PLANNING A SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNITION EVENT

- Be creative. Incorporate the event into a meeting if funds are limited.
- Schedule the event on the Panhellenic calendar early and budget for it.
- Select a festive and appropriate location.
- Send invitations early. Campus officials need four to six weeks notice. Invite chapter members, the Panhellenic Executive Board, delegates, chapter scholarship officers, your fraternity/sorority advisor, the vice president for student affairs, chapter faculty advisors,



parents, chapter advisors, resident advisors ... this is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Panhellenic.

- Use printed or online invitations. Sample wording:

In enthusiastic recognition of Panhellenic scholarship

You are invited to attend

A special scholarship event

[Day, time]

[Location]

RSVP to [name] by [date]

Email

Attire

- Request an RSVP and keep track of responses.
- Prepare name tags for all attendees or have name tags for attendees to fill out and wear.
- Assign hostesses for campus administration and faculty members who are attending.
- Plan an appropriate menu within your budget while being mindful of any dietary restrictions.
- Arrange for a guest speaker and confirm the date, time and how long you would like them to speak. Get the speaker's biography for their introduction.
- Confirm food arrangements.
- Prepare award certificates or purchase plaques.
- Purchase appreciation gift for speaker.
- Plan the order of the program and who is speaking. Script comments, if desired, including introduction of guests, speaker's bio and thank yous:
 - » Welcome (include purpose of event and accomplishments of the Panhellenic community)
 - » Describe scholarship programming
 - » Introduce special guests: campus administration, faculty
 - » Introduce speaker
 - » Speaker
 - » Thank speaker
 - » Present awards
 - » Concluding comments



- Arrive early to make sure room is set up and set out name tags, awards, etc.
- Greet your guests and spread the Panhellenic spirit. You've planned a great event.
- Send thank you notes to faculty and administrators who attended.

PANHELLENIC AND/OR CHAPTER FACULTY ADVISORS

A faculty advisor (in addition to a student affairs staff advisor) can provide a vital link between the students and the faculty, bridging the gap between classroom and out-of-classroom activities. The College Panhellenic Academic Excellence Committee should encourage all chapters to have a faculty advisor. This relationship is entirely open and does not require the faculty member be of the same gender or be a member of that organization.

Roles and responsibilities a faculty advisor may undertake:

- Meet at least once a term with the scholarship officers and/or the president to talk about the chapter's academic program and its goals, and offer suggestions to strengthen the role of academics in the chapter.
- Attend a chapter meeting to meet the members/new members/members at academic risk and talk to them about academics, faculty expectations and the transition to college-level work.
- Meet confidentially with members at academic risk to help them develop an individual plan to improve their GPA, utilize campus resources and progress toward their degrees.
- Suggest other faculty members who would be appropriate speakers at chapter events or the scholarship recognition event.
- Write recommendations (as possible) for chapter members for graduate school, internships, study abroad opportunities, etc.
- Serve as an ambassador for the fraternity/sorority community within the campus community.
- Serve as a sounding board for new ideas and initiatives.
- Function as needed or desired with the Panhellenic community.



Introduce the faculty advisor to the new members each year. This will make new members aware the faculty advisor exists and will make them more apt to take advantage of their services.

The rewards of being a faculty advisor are sometimes intangible. There is the satisfaction of knowing he or she has helped individuals achieve their potential, an increase in the awareness of what the student deals with on a daily basis outside the classroom and an opportunity to instill a greater love of intellectual development as a lifetime habit.

NEW MEMBERS

It is important for your College Panhellenic and its chapters to foster an appreciation for academic excellence in new members because they are the future of your chapters and your Panhellenic community. We want new members to excel and persist in college (and their chapters) to graduation. Help them prepare for solid careers (although that may seem far off during their first semester of membership).

Always remember fraternity/sorority organizations are part of an academic community first and foremost and will remain welcome in the community when their academic achievement levels launch students to greater scholastic success.

WAYS TO HELP (NEW) MEMBERS ACHIEVE ACADEMICALLY

- Provide a calendar with time commitments specified in advance.
- Pair a new member with an initiated member in the same major to assist with registration, class/professor selection, study buddies, study times and learning college-level study skills in required courses for a major.
- Provide awards and incentives for high achievement and improvement.
- Encourage chapters to monitor each member's academic performance. Have special support procedures in place for students at risk. Check in the fifth week of the term.
- Recruit and use a faculty advisor.
- Bring in faculty and other speakers on topics of interest to the new members/chapter.



- Schedule tours of the campus, campus buildings, libraries, computer labs, health and counseling centers, career center and the learning support office.
- Invite faculty speakers on topics such as making the transition from high school to college and appropriate ways to establish faculty communication, faculty pet peeves, etc.
- Explain established GPA expectations that members must maintain to remain in good standing and what happens if a member falls below the standard.
- Determine what the new member class academic goals will be and explain the academic goals of the community.
- Announce cultural events on campus and attend in small groups or as chapters.
- Inform members about academic honor societies, study abroad opportunities, internships, scholarships available, etc.
- Provide a positive and effective study environment within your chapter facility.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS TO SUPPORT NEW MEMBERS

- Library tours and how to utilize all the various resources available.
- On-campus tutoring and supplemental instruction.
- Writing labs/centers.
- Counseling center focus groups on scholarship topics and stress management.
- Learning skills workshop given by academic support office.
- Accommodations for students with documented learning disabilities.
- Understanding the add/drop/withdraw policies and deadlines.
- Understanding how to make up incomplete grades or the historical repeat process or policy for your campus.
- Establishing relationships with faculty.



TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR NEW MEMBERS

1. Take control of your schedule; don't let it run you.
2. Know your most productive hours.
3. Accomplish a vital goal rather than many trivial ones.
4. Break down large, overwhelming goals (projects and/or assignments) into many smaller, more attainable tasks.
5. Carry a calendar/date book/smartphone and write everything down.
6. Keep a calendar to be aware of university dates to drop/add courses.
7. Make lists of things to do and check them off when completed.
8. Finish one task at a time and do unpleasant tasks first.
9. Set aside a time for daily planning.
10. Don't shuffle papers; handle it now if possible.
11. Take control of your time on the internet.
12. Be careful about what you post about yourself on the internet.
13. Be neat; the job will be easier.
14. Set aside one time to retrieve messages/make phone calls.
15. Set deadlines for yourself and meet them.
16. Allow time for yourself.