



Considerations for Creating a More Inclusive Panhellenic Community

The National Panhellenic Conference's Access and Equity Advisory Committee reviewed barriers that may prohibit various [social identities](#) from feeling included in the Panhellenic community and provided guidance to NPC regarding how College Panhellenic Associations can create a more inclusive Panhellenic community.

Below are recommendations College Panhellenics can use to address or remove some of the barriers the committee identified. Please note, this list is not all-inclusive, but rather a place to begin in providing a more welcoming and accessible experience.

Communication

- Use inclusive language when referring to date parties, formals and other aspects of College Panhellenic social life, keeping in mind not every member of the community is heterosexual.
- Widely and honestly market financial assistance offered by the College Panhellenic, chapters, inter/national organizations or alumnae chapters before Panhellenic recruitment to attract potential new members (PNMs) who may not seek membership due to cost.
- Use captions/image descriptions on the Panhellenic website and social media posts. For photographs, provide a description of the photograph or digital photos added as "alt text." Additionally, follow camel case style for hashtag usage, capitalizing the start of each word. For example, #JoinASorority.
- Provide information about Panhellenic sororities and primary recruitment in a variety of languages for nonnative speakers of English and their caregiver(s).
- Provide the option for printed documents to be available in large print or for the font size of online content to be modified. Additionally, choose [colors](#) for text and background that are easy to read.
- Avoid using ableist language in documents, social media or conversations. Ableist language comprises words and phrases that are offensive to people with disabilities and others. For example, "running home" on Bid Day.
- Ensure all attendees can hear clearly what is being communicated during in-person or online events and meetings. Plan ahead to provide alternative options available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, such as text-to-type capabilities, captions on Zoom/PowerPoint, sign language interpreters or a separate area with enhanced sound capability and background noise reduction. Additionally, if there is a microphone (or the ability to use a microphone) in a space, use it regardless of whether people say they can hear.



Operations and Programming

- Provide education and programming on various social identities and how to be more inclusive and accepting.
- Provide education and programming on topics such as bodyism, fatphobia, sizeism, anti-fat bias, anti-fatness, body positivity and body neutrality.
- Use interfaith calendars, [this one](#) from the University of Southern California, to ensure Panhellenic programming does not conflict with religious, spiritual or cultural holidays.
- Make community members and chapters aware of any campus resources regarding safe zone training to help facilitate a healthy environment for members of the LGBTQ+ and ally community.
- Provide education and programming regarding how to support to members who may be undocumented. Due to the many challenges undocumented students face related to their or their families' immigration status, member safety should be at the forefront. This includes the emotional safety of knowing that undocumented students may engage in meaningful sisterhood experiences without exposure or jeopardizing their ability to pursue an education.

Marketing and Outreach

- Share and distribute recruitment information to an array of student populations and communities to help attract all women whose values align with the Panhellenic community to the sorority experience, regardless of their background or location. For example, when advertising for recruitment registration, reach out to all the high schools, religious institutions, teams and other community venues across the city, region or county to cast a wide net and ensure all college-bound young women in the area are receiving the same access to information and resources about Panhellenic sorority life.
- International students may not be knowledgeable about sororities due to sororities' lack of presence in other countries. Develop specific outreach opportunities for international students to learn more about what it means to be a member of a sorority and explain in detail the recruitment process. This may include developing a relationship with the office on campus that works directly with the international student population and having Panhellenic members learn from and serve as a resource for international student orientation or peer leaders/mentors.
- As campus demographics continue to change, more students beyond the age of 18-22 will begin their collegiate experience and join Panhellenic organizations. Create specific outreach programs for students to welcome these women to the sorority experience.
- Build relationships with religious life campus resources and faith-based student organizations as part of the Panhellenic's service and outreach efforts.
- Develop an awareness of and relationship with campus staff members or the office that works with LGBTQ+ students to aid in the Panhellenic's operations and programming and outreach efforts.



Recruitment

- Implement the [NPC Financial Transparency Program](#) to share the costs (and hidden costs) of membership with PNMs.
- Remove recruitment rules that require specific attire to be worn by both PNMs and chapter members.
- Showcase body diversity in any recruitment-related materials (e.g., look books, "what to wear" resources, social media) without tokenization.
- Plan ahead to provide an accessible environment. Being proactive contributes to inclusion and does not require those with different abilities to ask for accommodations.
- Be clear to PNMs and chapter members that for any disability, accommodation can and should be requested. Have a College Panhellenic officer or campus staff member review the request for accommodations section on the recruitment registration form or another reporting channel. This gives PNMs, if interested in doing so, the opportunity to share what they need to successfully navigate the recruitment process.
- Evaluate possible mobility barriers when identifying event venues and housing and eliminate the barriers or change the location. If changing locations is not an option, provide an alternative option for those with disabilities.
- Provide seating and options for anyone who needs to sit allows people to use the resource if they need it without having to explain their disability or health diagnoses. Prolonged standing can be a barrier for those with a mobility disability or other health diagnoses.
- Do not create restrictions for members or PNMs to keep their own snacks or water on hand. Lack of refreshment can affect those with nutrition and hydration sensitive disorders, such as diabetes.
- Recognize hot and/or crowded spaces can affect the physical well-being of most individuals. Be aware of the physical space and allow for distancing, if possible.
- Be aware not everyone functions well in every social environment. Provide alternative experiences that eliminate trauma triggers, crowded settings or other situations that can cause uneasiness to someone who has anxiety, depression or other mental health/emotional needs. Some women may find virtual recruitment more enticing because they likely found a sense of comfort or relief in being able to engage through Zoom from a safe environment without a great deal of noise and other distractions like hundreds of other people in a congested space.