What is Fraternity & Sorority Life All About?

Fraternity and sorority life can provide your student with an invaluable experience during his or her time at San José State University. With over 100 years of fraternity and sorority history, Greek Life is a Spartan tradition. The SJSU fraternity and sorority community provides brotherhood and sisterhood for over 1,500 men and women every year. Approximately 6% of undergraduate students at SJSU are members of the Greek community, which is comprised of approximately 45 organizations. Greek life provides an opportunity for quality enhancement to the undergraduate collegiate experience and is another way for students to make San José State University their home away from home.

The sororities and fraternities at SJSU are extremely diverse and make up an integral part of the San José State University community. Four student-run councils govern the fraternities and sororities. They are the compilation of Greek chapters and act as the governing body of those chapters. These include the Interfraternity Council (IFC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), and the United Sorority and Fraternity Council (USFC).

Fraternities and Sororities Provide an Environment Where:
- the principles and ideals of each organization's rituals are encouraged on a daily basis.
- personal health, well-being, and safety are encouraged and promoted.
- academic achievement of the individual and the group is valued and rewarded.
- the definition of what it means to be a member of a fraternity or sorority is inclusive of all Greeks at SJSU and supports the non-discrimination policy of the University.
- the fraternity/sorority experience is a quality enhancement to the undergraduate collegiate experience.

Why Should Your Student Join a Fraternity or Sorority?

Membership in a Greek-letter organization is a life-changing experience for the individuals who choose to join, sharing their values and objectives. Chapter members develop a unique bond of brotherhood and sisterhood. These friendships last beyond the collegiate years and are nurtured by alumni/ae activities and networking programs that provide opportunities for continued camaraderie, service, and personal development.

- The Greek community offers a home away from home and encourages individual development within a smaller group of friends in a larger university environment.
- Fraternities and sororities encourage academic achievement, the development of leadership skills, community service, and brotherhood and sisterhood. Each chapter participates in philanthropic activities for collegiate and alumni chapters.
- When your student's college experience is finished, his or her fraternity or sorority affiliation continues for a lifetime. This lifelong bond encourages continued involvement in the organization at the local level and across the nation.
- Greek-letter organizations are values-based and committed to worthwhile endeavors. Members are expected to maintain the high standards set by their chapter as well as the values established by the founders of their organizations.

DID YOU KNOW?
- Fraternities and sororities are the oldest form of student self-governance in the centuries-old American system of higher education
- National study finds that Greek membership increases the likelihood that a student will stay in college and that affiliation in a fraternity or sorority may contribute positively to community involvement after college
- Approximately 80% of the top Executives of Fortune 500 companies, 76% of current U.S. Senators and Congressmen/women, and all but two U.S. Presidents since 1825 have been Greek
- Nationally, Greek men and women typically match or exceed campus grade point averages
- SJSU fraternities and sororities donate thousands of dollars to charities annually
Common Concerns About Greek Life

ACADEMICS

All Greek-letter organizations expect each member to strive to fulfill his/her academic potential. Student Involvement and each national organization set minimum GPA standards. When a member falls below this standard, additional academic programs are designed and required for the student. Most chapters have an alumnus/na advisor and/or faculty advisor whose focus is the scholastic success of each member. Chapters also acknowledge scholastic achievement with awards, scholarships, and various forms of recognition every year.

COST

Joining a sorority/fraternity does carry a financial commitment. Each chapter is self-supporting through the dues paid by each member, each semester. The costs go toward Inter/National fees, chapter operating expenses, and social functions. While your student is participating in the recruitment process, make sure that he or she asks about the financial obligations of membership. Students should discuss the financial obligations with their family before deciding to join. Each chapter has different financial expectations and several have scholarships available. For more information on cost, please visit the chapters’ local and inter/national websites for more detailed information.

SAFETY CONCERNS

SJSU has a zero-tolerance policy regarding hazing that is consistent with California state law. All chapters are expected to uphold state laws, and the University’s policies regarding the consumption of alcohol. SJSU administrators work hand-in-hand with San José State law enforcement and students in order to enforce alcohol and hazing policies in accordance with the state law, keeping our students safe. If you sense that your student may be participating in inappropriate activities as a result of membership in a fraternity or sorority, you should contact Student Involvement or the University Police Department immediately. For the University hazing policy and Student Organization Code of Conduct, please see: http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/docs/Student_Org_Code_of_Conduct.pdf.

My student is considering joining a Greek organization…what advice can I give them?

Since joining a fraternity or sorority is a lifelong commitment, and there is an expense associated with membership, it should be a joint decision between the student and families. Consider sitting down with your student to research all of the University-recognized organizations at SJSU. Utilizing local chapter and national websites is a great, convenient way to gather information. Feel free to contact students who are currently involved, along with their family, and ask them about their experience. In most cases, both students and families will speak candidly about their Greek involvement.

How can my student join?

Depending on the fraternity or sorority, the process to join may differ. Recruitment begins with informational sessions and events that all students at San José State University are invited to attend. Check the San José State University Student Involvement website (http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/) for the most up to date information for recruitment events.

• IFC IFC chapters hold their recruitment process. Students participate in these recruitment activities to find out more about the fraternity community at SJSU. This process varies by fraternity, but historically involves a combination of social functions, brotherhood events, and one-on-one interaction. The process varies by organization and allows students the opportunity to explore Greek Life without the pressure of joining any particular fraternity. At the conclusion of Recruitment, each fraternity extends “bids,” or offers of membership to men they want to join their chapter.

• NPHC The National Pan-Hellenic Council is a coalition of historically African-American organizations. If you are interested in the membership intake process, consult the chapter websites and chapter calendars. NPHC chapters routinely hold educational and social events that all San José State University students are invited to attend.

• PANHELLENIC (NPC) Membership in a National Panhellenic Conference sorority is voluntary and is the result of mutual selection. Formal recruitment is a time set aside every Fall, for sorority members and unaffiliated women to get to know one another better. Through a structured process, women get to attend events and open houses at each of our Panhellenic chapters. The process ends with offers of membership to many of those who have entered the process. Continuous informal recruitment also occurs within some groups throughout the entire year. Offers of membership during informal recruitment may occur at any time during the process of chapter members getting to know unaffiliated women within the University.

• USFC The diverse organizations within the United Sorority and Fraternity council have an equally unique collection of recruitment processes. While some organizations have a formal recruitment, other organizations create interest through word-of-mouth. Because organizations in this council are based upon special interests, many are able to recruit based on the existence of their organization’s unique core values. More specific information such as frequency, nature, and length of intake should be gathered through inquiries with individual organizations and their local websites.

Want to learn more?

Make sure to check-out the “Information for Parents and Family Members” section of our website at http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/frso/pfinfo/index.html.