



Title: Fraternity and Sorority Programs Policy
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Policy Contact: Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students
478-301-2685

Purpose

Fraternity and sorority organizations have traditionally assumed a very active role in contributing to the cultural, educational, and social life on Mercer's campus. The purpose of this policy is to provide definitions and guidance for these programs.

Scope

This policy applies to the following:

- all first-year students, potential new members, and all members of a social fraternity and sorority organization at Mercer University;
- all organized or formal functions of Mercer University social fraternity and sorority organizations and members on or off campus (recruitment, social, service, etc.)

Exclusions

None

Definitions

As used in this policy, the following term(s) have the meaning specified below:

Chapter Events: Any pre-organized, planned event or gathering including but not limited to tailgating, recreational activities, parties on or off-campus, studying as a group, date nights, formals, philanthropy events, community service, open houses, etc.

First-year Student: all newly enrolled, first-year students who are entering Mercer University as their first full-time collegiate experience, regardless of age or number of credits when entering.

Member: any Mercer University student who has been and still is initiated in a social Greek letter organization.

Potential New Member: any Mercer University student of the same gender as your chapter not already a member of a fraternity or sorority chapter.

Social Event: any event off or on campus organized independently by the chapter for its members and guests that is separate from official university-coordinated events such as Homecoming team participation, council- led recruitment events, intramurals, Bear Fair, and other organized events.

Policy Statement

Fraternities and sororities are involved in educational programs, community service and philanthropic projects, and leadership development in addition to providing a strong bond of friendship. In addition to the guidelines below, Fraternity and Sorority organizations will be held accountable to all policies found in the “Community of Respect” section of the Student Code of Conduct. When different, the Division of Student Affairs or this Fraternity and Sorority Programs Policy supersedes council-specific policies.

A. Membership Requirements

1. All first-year students are welcome to participate in primary recruitment activities on their campus of record; however, first-year students on the Macon campus are expected to abide by the Delayed Recruitment Policies found later in this document.
2. GPA requirements are determined by each chapter.
3. Each chapter has adopted its own guidelines related to community service and recommendation letters for potential new members. Please refer to that chapter or council’s guidelines for specific information.
4. Fraternity and Sorority organizations at Mercer are open to all full-time, degree seeking, currently enrolled Mercer undergraduate students.
5. Membership decisions are made solely by the chapter and adhere to national organization guidelines. The Division of Student Affairs is not involved in membership decisions or guidelines for evaluation of membership.
6. Governing councils and Pan Associate Member chapters are subject to specific national guidelines and timelines regarding membership intake. Therefore, membership intake concerning the timeframe and the decision to conduct membership intake may vary for each chapter.
7. The Division of Student Affairs will advertise council-specific formal recruitment activities for IFC and Panhellenic and will advertise chapter-specific events for NPHC and Panhellenic Associate Member chapters.
8. Requirements to be Initiated
 - a. Fraternity and sorority organizations that have GPA and hour requirements for new members must conform to the standards of their Inter/national headquarters or local requirements, whichever is higher.
 - b. All fraternities and sororities must register all new member periods/intakes and pre- initiation/initiation activities with the Division of Student Affairs before a process can begin. This includes immediately following formal

recruitments in the fall and informal recruitment processes throughout the year.

- The new member education period cannot not last longer than 8 weeks from Bid Day.
- Formal initiation ceremonies are considered separate from the new member education period.
- No initiation activities may be conducted during the final examination period.
- Chapters that extend bids outside of the formal recruitment process in the fall or spring must conclude the new member education period within 8 weeks or before the final examination period begins, whichever is first. This may mean a shortened new member period.
- NPHC and Panhellenic Associate Member chapters that run an intake must schedule the new member presentation before the final examination period begins. An in-person or public new member presentation is not required by the Division of Student Affairs.
- Failure to report the exact new member period, date of initiation, intake and new member presentation may result in a conduct referral.

B. Membership Recruitment

Delayed Recruitment for the Macon Campus

Delayed recruitment is the time on Macon's residential undergraduate campus each fall semester that begins at Panhellenic move-in and ends the day following IFC formal night. This time in the semester is made for incoming first-year students at Mercer to get acquainted with all of Mercer's campus and interact with the Fraternity and Sorority Programs (FSP) community through positive, on-campus, and approved events and informal interactions with current members of the fraternity and sorority community. There is no delayed recruitment policy in the spring of each year.

The purpose of delayed recruitment is to create a safe, positive environment for incoming first-year students to acclimate to campus prior to affiliating with a fraternity or sorority organization.

1. Limited Contact

Fraternity or sorority students may interact with first-year students under the following circumstances:

- On campus
- In the classroom
- In businesses in Mercer Village or Mercer Landing with no alcohol present
- At pre-approved events hosted by the chapter or council

Fraternity or sorority students may NOT interact with first-year students under the following circumstances:

- Off campus (The Lofts, off-campus houses, downtown Macon, public venues, and any other off-campus location not specified)
- In the chapter houses
- At chapter events not approved by Campus Life to allow first-year students
- In first-year residence halls and current fraternity or sorority member residence hall rooms

2. Sanctioned Chapter Event

All fraternity or sorority chapter social and recruitment events, outside of formal events sponsored by councils on campus and listed on formal recruitment or intake schedules, are the sole responsibility of the sponsoring organization. Mercer University does not endorse or monitor off-campus events. Organizations must adhere to all federal and state laws, as well as the rules governing student behavior found in the Student Code of Conduct and guidelines and by-laws associated with each fraternity or sorority council. Any off-campus event prior to the end of delayed recruitment hosted by an organization in which first-year students are present would be in direct violation with this policy.

3. Reporting and Investigative Process

Once reported, the incident will be investigated following the non-academic misconduct process for student organizations or reported to the council if it violates council policies. Following an expedited investigation, the case will be referred to the adjudicating body responsible for the level of the violation. If found responsible, the student(s) and the chapter will receive the fine and sanction appropriate for the violation. Violations of the university code of conduct may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct Resolution for individuals or to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs for chapter conduct under the Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations.

4. Violations/Sanctions

- a. A Level 1 violation is a Fraternity and Sorority Programs delayed recruitment policy violation. This level is adjudicated by Campus Life. Each fine is \$250.
 - If found responsible, first-year students involved in the violation will be unable to accept a bid for 1 year.
 - If found responsible, the chapter would be unable to participate in recruitment until fine paid.
- b. A Level 2 violation is a contact violation involving alcohol. This level is adjudicated under the Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations. Each fine is \$500.
 - If found responsible, first-year students involved in the violation

will be unable to accept a bid for 1 year.

- Chapter may be unable to participate in recruitment.
- Further charges on the chapter and individual level may occur as a result of the investigation.

Please note that any violation involving alcohol regardless of the type of infraction will be investigated under the Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations. Serious infractions may result in suspension of the chapter from campus.

- c. Should a chapter have multiple violations at any level, Student Affairs may remove a chapter from formal recruitment.

Continuous Open Bidding/Recruitment

Chapters may conduct continuous open recruitment outside of formal recruitment following the guidelines set by their governing council and the Office of Campus Life/Fraternity and Sorority Programs.

Fraternity or Sorority Policy Violation and/or Unauthorized Rushing/Recruitment/Membership Intake

Chapters must follow all governing council rules, Mercer policy and national expectations when recruiting and educating new members. Failure to comply with recruitment policies will be adjudicated based on an investigation. The severity and pervasive nature of violation(s) will be considered when issuing sanctions.

1. Failure to comply with all the instructions that guide membership into fraternity and sorority programs, which includes, but is not limited to recruitment, timelines, events, activities, and documentation.
2. Participating, arranging, or engaging in an unauthorized rush or intake processes known as “underground pledging.” This includes coercing a student or organization to facilitate a process as well as students willingly engaging in a process not approved by the University or the affiliated national organization.

C. Social Events

1. All on-campus events whether inside or outside must abide by the Mercer University Student Code of Conduct, housing handbook regarding noise, event times and music. Please note that Mercer has a 24-hour noise courtesy policy.
2. The following criteria may be used to evaluate if an event is a chapter event:
 - The event is paid for by the chapter (with chapter funds or donations);
 - The event is endorsed by the chapter in any shape, form, or manner;
 - The event is advertised on social media, email or on paper as a chapter event;
 - The chapter Executive Board has knowledge of, and/or is present, at the event;
 - 50% or more of the chapter membership is in attendance;

- The average person would associate the event with the organization in question.
3. Off-campus social events are the responsibility of the chapter/organization and are not approved by the University. All events are expected to follow all policies provided by the Student Affairs designee including all social event policies and the Student Code of Conduct.
 4. All social events must be submitted to the Student Affairs designee. By submitting the event, the organization is acknowledging responsibility for compliance with this policy. Student Affairs is not charged with monitoring the event but may investigate violations of the law or University policy that occur at any event with other University agencies (i.e., Mercer Police) or local law enforcement.
 5. Groups are solely and fully responsible for the safety of the participants involved in the events they sponsor.
 6. In the event of an incident (e.g., injury, policy or law violation) before, during, or after the event, the organization must immediately report the incident to Mercer Police then follow up with the appropriate University official(s) the next business day.
 7. All Macon campus social Greek letter organizations must adhere to the off campus social policy and utilize the form online at <https://campuslife.mercer.edu/macon/fsp/resources/>.

Failure to follow this policy may result in a student organization investigation by the Office of Student Conduct Resolution or sanctions by the Division of Student Affairs.

Additional Resources

Campus Life Resources: <https://campuslife.mercer.edu/macon/fsp/resources/>

Appendices

Appendix A: Examples of Delayed Recruitment Violations

Level One Violations are any contact on campus including the Lofts, contact in a residence hall room, Greek Village houses, or first-year student residence halls. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Studying with first-year students in a freshman residence hall.
- Inviting first-year students to the chapter house to hang out whether inside or outside of the house.
- Inviting a first-year student (male or female) to a date night or chapter event on or off-campus.
- Going to lunch off-campus with a first-year student.

Level Two Examples are any interaction listed above where alcohol is present.

- For example, if you are bowling and drinking beer and first-year students show

up and attempt to bowl with you and/or join your group, you need to leave at this point immediately.

- Extended contact downtown in any capacity in which alcohol is present. This includes all bars and restaurants downtown and otherwise.
- Hosting a party at an off-campus house and first-year students are present.
- Any chapter member, whether one or ten, at an unaffiliated off- campus party (football, lacrosse, etc.) and first-year students are present.
- Chapter member drinks with a first-year student in any location. Residence hall, The Bird, The Lofts, a restaurant, etc.
- A meal between a chapter member and first-year student in Mercer Village or Mercer Landing in which alcohol is present
- Hosting an open party downtown that has no guest list or registration

Examples of Non-Violations

- Attending an event organized by a student organization or office at an off-campus location as a general member. The event in no way can include alcohol. For example, a religious life kick-off event at a downtown church or venue.
- Speaking to first year students on-campus
- Going to coffee with a first-year student registered for recruitment at the Mercer Village Z Beans.

Appendix B: Social Event Processes for the Macon Campus

1. Organizations are not required to register service-oriented or leadership events, or regular business meetings unless there exists a social component in any shape, form, or manner.
2. Chapters must complete and submit to the Office of Campus Life a social event registration form a minimum of seven days in advance of any social event on or off campus. Forms can be found on the Campus Life website under Fraternity and Sorority Programs –Resources.
[\(https://campuslife.mercer.edu/macon/fsp/resources/\)](https://campuslife.mercer.edu/macon/fsp/resources/).
3. Chapter advisors must be notified of each event and must approve the event in advance. When applicable, national offices should be notified of social events. All required social event forms for national offices should be on file prior to the event.
4. On-campus events are reserved and approved through the University event reservation process.