

## Greek Terminology

Below is a list of terms commonly used throughout Greek Life:

**Active (often referred to as Brother or Sister):** A person who has been initiated into a Greek organization. Generally, the term is used to reference a member who is currently an Undergraduate; however, it is preferable to use the terms "undergraduate member" or "student member" for those still in school.

**Affiliation:** The fraternity or sorority to which the individual belongs.

**Alumna:** A sorority member who has graduated from college. Some organizations confer alumni status after an initiate has been an active member for four or more years. Plural-Alumnae

**Alumni/ae Association:** An organization of alumni from an individual Fraternity or Sorority. The association may be based on geographical location or chapter.

**Alumnus ("Alum"):** A fraternity member who has graduated from college. Some organizations confer alumni status after an initiate has been an active member for four or more years. Plural-Alumni

**Associate Member:** A person who has accepted the bid of a Greek organization but has not yet been initiated into full membership.

**Badge:** The symbol worn by the initiated member of a Greek-letter organization.

**Bid:** An invitation from a fraternity or sorority to a man or woman to become a new member.

**Bid Day:** The day bids are given out to potential new members.

**Big Brother/Sister:** An initiated member of a fraternity/sorority assigned to an associate member as a guide.

**Brother:** An initiated member of a fraternity.

**Call/Chant:** A vocal sound (sometimes high-pitched) used by members of cultural based Greek organizations to acknowledge one another

**Chapter:** The campus group of an (Inter) National Greek organization. Within each organization, chapters are usually referenced by state and/or Greek letters. For example, Texas Sigma Chapter or Alpha Delta Chapter

**Chapter Advisor:** An alumnus who establishes and maintains a close advisory relationship with a chapter and serves as a teacher, counselor, and friend.

**Colony:** A newly formed affiliate of a national organization that has not yet received its charter. The members of a colony are referred to as "founders."

**Crossed:** The actual date of initiation into a cultural Greek organization. The term is used to represent the symbolic “crossing of the burning sands”.

**Depledge:** The termination of a pledge's relationship with a Greek organization.

**Dry Recruitment:** Alcohol is forbidden from all events associated with introducing the fraternity/sorority to new members.

**Dues:** These are the membership, philanthropic, and other fees paid to the local chapter of a sorority or fraternity in order to be a member in good standing and for the local chapter to stay in good standing with its national organization.

**F.I.P.G.:** Fraternity Insurance Purchasing Group is a group of national/international fraternities that have grouped together to form a uniform risk management policy in order to obtain adequate liability insurance.

**Formal Recruitment:** The “official” recruitment period of the year with specific scheduled events. This is the most concentrated for entertaining and selecting new members is known as "Recruitment Week". The term Recruitment has replaced the term Rush in most instances.  
**Fraternity:** The name informally applied to a Greek-letter brotherhood that all have the same basic ideals, hopes, and goals. Formally, both men's and women's groups were called fraternities, though many of the women's groups now refer to themselves as a "Fraternity for Women"

**Greek:** An informal name of a member of a Fraternity or Sorority.

**Greek Advisor:** A staff member that helps guide and structure the Greek community and its members.

**Greek Week:** A special week each year where all the Greeks come together. This week includes such events as Greek games, tug-of-war, and Greek Lip-sync. Greek Week at the University of Texas at San Antonio helps promote unity within the Greek system.

**Hazing:** Any willful act or practice by a member or associate member, directed against a member or associate member, which, with or without intent, is likely 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 impair academic efforts. In addition, hazing is any requirement by a member or pledge that compels a member or associate member to participate in any activity that is illegal, contrary to a member's or associate member's moral or religious beliefs or contrary to the rules and regulations of the fraternity, institution of learning and civil authorities. Hazing is prohibited by university policy, State law, and the policies of national fraternities and sororities.

**Inactive Member:** A member attending the same institution in which his undergraduate chapter is located shall not become inactive except upon the recommendation of his undergraduate chapter and the approval of the Alumni Board of Trustees of his chapter. An inactive member

shall have no material participation in undergraduate chapter activities, including, but not limited to, social activities and voting at undergraduate chapter meetings.

**Initiation:** A formal, ritual ceremony through which new members become full members of a Greek organization.

**Intake:** The membership recruitment and induction process for the National Pan-Hellenic Council (historically African-American fraternities and sororities) and some MGC fraternities and sororities.

**Lavalier:** a piece of jewelry depicting the letters of one's organization

**Lavaliering (also known as dropping):** The practice of a fraternity member giving his lavalier to a woman signifying a committed relationship between the two. As the relationship becomes more serious, the next step would be "Pinning."

**Legacy:** A student who has a brother/sister, mother/father, aunt/uncle, and/or grandfather/grandmother who is a member of a particular fraternity or sorority. Legacies are often granted special consideration in the membership recruitment process but never guaranteed membership.

**Line:** Term sometimes used by various culturally based Greek organizations to refer to the members who join the same semester.

**Little Brother:** The new member of a fraternity that is paired up with a Big Brother.

**Little Sister:** The new member of a Sorority that is paired up with a Big Sister.

**Little Sisters:** A woman's auxiliary of some fraternity chapters that are prohibited by the North American Inter-Fraternity Council, UTSA Interfraternity Council and most national Fraternities.

**Mixer:** An activity where the members of one Greek organization visit the chapter of another Greek organization for a social event.

**National:** The national or international organization to which a chapter is affiliated. Most have a national board of directors, comprised primarily of alumni, and national headquarters with support staff.

**Neophyte:** A new member of a cultural Greek organization

**New Member:** A student in his or her first phase of membership in a sorority or fraternity (before being initiated). Also known as Pledges Candidate, Line Brother/Sister or Associate Members.

**New Member Education Process:** The time period in which candidates for active membership (or new members) learn about the organization and participate in brotherhood/sisterhood activities.

**New Member Pin:** A pin that designates a new member of a Greek organization

**Order of Omega:** A national honor society recognizing fraternity and sorority members who excel in academic achievement, Greek leadership and campus involvement.

**Philanthropy:** The chapter's specific charitable organization(s) that they donate money and volunteer hours

**Pin:** The fraternity/sorority badge of membership.

**Pinning:** The practice of a fraternity member giving his member's Badge to a woman. (When a woman is "pinned," if she is a member of a sorority, the sisters will be brought together in a private, candlelit ceremony where the secret pinning will be announced to the sisterhood and then celebrated.) This step is often preceded by a "Lavaliering" and is a precursor to engagement.

**Pledge:** A pledge is a student that has accepted a bid to join a sorority or fraternity who has not yet been initiated. This is an outdated term that has been replaced with new member or associate member.

**Pledge Class:** A group of new members being introduced to ideals and history of the Sorority or Fraternity they wish to join. This is an outdated term that has been replaced with new member class or associate member class.

**Pledge Period:** The time during which new members learn about the fraternity or sorority they are joining; also called a Pledgeship. This is an outdated term.

**Potential Member:** A non-member who is eligible to participate in the rush program, visiting Greek organizations with an interest in possibly affiliating with one organization.

**Preferential Bidding:** A system used (primarily by sororities) to conclude rush with the organizations and potential members indicating their choices. After bidding there is a procedure for an individual's ultimate association with one organization.

**Quota:** The number of women each sorority may pledge in a formal recruitment period.

**Recommendation:** Sometimes a potential member may not be a legacy, but she may know an alumna of a sorority chapter. In these cases, the alumna may choose to write a recommendation or letter of introduction to the chapter of the sorority of which she is a member. This letter generally is a means by which the sorority can get to know a bit more about a potential member since Recruitment events are so short and often hurried in conversation. It is not necessary to have any letters of recommendation to go through the recruitment process.

**Recruitment:** A series of events offering members and potential members the opportunity to get to know each other.

**Risk Management:** Involves analyzing all exposures to the possibility of loss and determining how to handle these exposures and reduce or transfer the risk.

**Ritual:** The traditional ceremonies of a chapter, which are usually secret

**Sister:** An initiated member of a sorority.

**Sisterhood/Brotherhood:** Intangible, yet the most cherished of assets among all Greek members, sisterhood and brotherhood are the foundations of sorority and fraternity life. Both are difficult to explain, but they can be basically characterized by their most common and identifiable element.

**Social:** The Greek community at Texas State offers a well-rounded social life, and provides the opportunity for developing lifelong friendships. Many activities are organized not only to become closer to one's sisters and brothers, but to members of other chapters as well. Men and women get together for original theme parties, and informal or formal dances that provide many rewarding and fun memories.

**Sorority:** An individual women's Greek-letter organization. This is the term commonly used to distinguish between men's (fraternities) and women's (sororities) organizations. As noted previously, some sororities are identified as a fraternity (or fraternity for women) in their official name.

**Strict Silence:** Not discussing recruitment with non-sorority members outside of the recruitment events

**Stroll:** A line dance done by members of cultural Greek organizations (usually at a party or step show)