

# Greek Terminology

The purpose of this page and the following terms is to help all students, faculty/staff, visitors of the university, and members of the community familiarize themselves with the Greek community. Each term is defined to help the reader of this page to better understand Greek life.

If you have questions about any of the terms below or terms that are not on this page, please contact us at [Greeks@uww.edu](mailto:Greeks@uww.edu).

**Active:**

A member of a Greek organization who is currently still enrolled as an undergraduate and meets the requirements of the university and their chapter (i.e. academics, conduct, etc.)

**Badge/Pin:**

The official pin of an initiated member of a fraternity or sorority.

**Bid:**

An invitation to join a fraternity or sorority.

**Bid Day:**

The last day of formal recruitment in which potential new members receive formal invitations to join a sorority

**Brother/Frat:**

A member of a fraternity.

**Big Brother/Sister:**

An active member of a fraternity or sorority who serves as a mentor to a new member, guiding them through the new member program (also referenced as Big)

**Call/Chant:**

A unique vocal recognition for a particular organization.

**Chapter:**

The name of a campus group of a Greek organization. For example, at UW-Whitewater.

**Chapter Meeting:**

A meeting held by the members of the chapter to discuss fraternity or sorority business

**Chapter House:**

A house where members of an organization reside. Not all chapters have houses

**Charter:**

Permission from the national organization to have a chapter

**Crossed/Crossing:**

The point of membership during the intake process when newly initiated members officially become members of a fraternity or sorority.

**Colony:**

An approved student organization working toward recognition as a chartered chapter of a Greek-lettered organization.

**Coming Out Show/Neophyte Presentation:**

A show used to introduce new members of an organization

**Dean/Dean of Pledges/Educator/Pledge Mom/Dad:**

A member of an organization who oversees the membership intake process

**"Divine Nine":**

A nickname for the nine historically African American Greek organizations on the National Pan-Hellenic Council

**Dues:**

A charge of joining a fraternity or sorority. It covers costs of national and local operations, formal events, activities and other events. The amount varies based on the organization.

**Executive Board/E-Board:**

The elected executive officers of a chapter or council (i.e. President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)

**Expansion:**

When an organization is looking to expand and open a chapter at a new college or university

**Formal Recruitment:**

The primary selection period of the year for potential new members that include scheduled events for entertaining and selecting new members. This is also referred to as "Recruitment Week"

**Founders Day:**

A date/event celebrated by fraternities and sororities to highlight the founding of their organization and celebrate its history. (i.e. the organization's birthday or anniversary)

**Fraternity:**

A social organization for male students, with specific objectives, rules and regulations.

**Greek/Greeks:**

A term applied to students affiliated with fraternities and sororities, often times referred to as Greek or Greek-lettered organizations.

**Greek Week:**

A week where all of the fraternities and sororities on campus host events and activities for the entire community to participate in (i.e. social and service events, networking events, etc.)

**IFC (Interfraternity Council):**

The governing council of the Fraternities.

**Informational/Info Night:**

A meeting held by a chapter for prospective members who are seeking general information about an organization.

**Infraction:**

When a sorority, fraternity, or the individual members violate a recruitment rule set forth either by the council or university

**Intake:**

The educational process that one goes through in order to become a member. Each organization has different policies and procedures for an intake process. In general, a potential new member decides which organization to join by showing interest towards a particular organization.

**Lavaliere:**

A necklace that bears the letters of a fraternity or sorority

**Legacy:**

The child, sibling, or grandchild (in some cases other relative) of an initiated fraternity or sorority member.

**Letters:**

The Greek symbols that represent each organization.

**Line/Ship:**

A group of members who are chosen to become inducted/initiated together in a particular organization.

**Line Brothers/Sisters:**

Individuals who are members of the same intake class.

**Little Brother/Sister:**

The nickname for the mentee of the big and little mentor relationship.

**Local Fraternity/Sorority:**

A Greek-lettered organization that exists solely on one specific campus, but also which has no affiliation with a national Greek organization

**Mascot:**

A symbol, usually an animal, chosen to represent a Greek letter organization

**Nationals:**

The national organization of a fraternity or sorority that sets policies and procedures for the entire organization and its members

**NPHC (National Pan-Hellenic Council):**

The governing council of the African American Sororities and Fraternities.

**Neophyte/Neo:**

A new member within a culturally-based organization

**“On the Yard”:**

An NPHC phrase meaning that a chapter is currently chartered on campus

**Order of Omega:**

An honor society for Greek members who demonstrate outstanding leadership and academic achievement

**Paraphernalia:**

Clothing and accessories that display an organizations letters

**PHC (Panhellenic Council):**

The governing council of the five Sororities.

**Quota:**

A set number of new members a sorority can extend bids to.

**Recruitment:**

**The process of receiving a bid and being accepted into a Fraternity or Sorority.**

**Ritual:**

Symbolic gestures or ceremonies, often kept secret, performed by only the members of the given fraternity or sorority.

**Sands:**

A word used to acknowledge other members that crossed over in other organizations or in the same organization, but different chapter during the same semester, term, etc. For example, new members of Fall 2014 would be considered sands.

**Sister/Soror:**

A member of a sorority

**Sorority:**

A social organization for female students, with specific objectives, rules and regulations.

**Step:**

A series of complex, synchronous and precise rhythmic body movements performed to the tune of stomps, songs, or chants created by organization members

**Strolling:**

The traditional dance or “party walk” performed by culturally-based fraternities and/or sororities