Greek Glossary

Active: A member of a fraternity or sorority who has been initiated and is currently in college.

Alumna/Alumnae: An initiated member of a women’s fraternity or sorority who has received her undergraduate degree.

Alumnus/Alumni: An initiated member of a fraternity or sorority who has received their undergraduate degree.

Badge (or Pin): A distinctive insignia worn on the chest designating a member of a particular fraternity or sorority.

Bid: A formal invitation to join a CPC sorority or IFC fraternity.

Big Brother or Sister: An older member assigned to assist a new member in his or her college transition.

Call: Audible sounds used by members of multi-cultural organizations to acknowledge or gain attention of other members.

Chapter: A chartered undergraduate or alumni group that is recognized by the inter/national fraternity or sorority.

Chapter Total: The maximum number of women that can be members in a Panhellenic sorority. Chapters who are under the total in the fall may choose to participate in COB/Informal Recruitment.

Continuous Open Bidding (COB): The period outside of formal recruitment when sorority chapters with membership spaces may extend bids.

College Panhellenic Council (CPC): The governing body of all National Panhellenic Council sororities at Western Carolina University.

Collegiate: An initiated member of a sorority or fraternity that has not yet graduated.

Colony: A fraternal membership which is in the process of becoming a Chapter on campus.

Divine Nine: Term used to describe the nine, national NPHC fraternities and sororities. Six of the nine national organizations are charted at Western Carolina University.

Formal Recruitment: A structured period set aside (typical within the first month of the Spring semester) where potential members and chapters participate in a mutual selection process to match potential members with IFC and CPC chapters.

Fraternity: a Greek –letter sisterhood or brotherhood.

Grip: Secret handshake exchanged by members of the same fraternity or sorority.
Hand Sign: symbol or gesture made with the hand(s) that signify membership in a particular organization. Hand signs should NOT be replicated by non-members.

Hazing: An activity which causes undue stress placed on any member that can be emotional, mental or physical.

Informational/Interest Meeting: Meeting for interested students to receive information about and meet members of NPHC and cultural-based organizations.

Initiation: The formal ritual ceremony that brings new members into full membership of the sorority or fraternity. Through initiation, members learn and pledge themselves to the ideals of the sorority and fraternity. Many initiation ceremonies are only open to initiated members.

Interfraternity Council (IFC): The governing body of all North-American Interfraternity Conference fraternities at Western Carolina University.

Legacy: A prospective member whose parent, sibling, or grandparent is an alumnae/alumni or active of a sorority or fraternity. Legacy stipulations vary by chapter/organization.

Line: The individuals who were initiated together. The term is primarily used by NPHC organizations.

Line Brothers/Sisters: Individuals that were a part of the same initiation (membership) process, at the same time, and in the same chapter. Each person usually obtains a number during initiation.

Membership Intake: The process of acquiring membership into a NPHC organization. Generally, characterized by an informational meeting, an application process, an interview or series of interviews and an educational process.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC): The governing body of historically Black sororities and fraternities sometimes referred to as the Divine Nine, being derived from the nine organizations that make up the council.

Neophyte: a new member of an NPHC organization. A member is typically referred to as a neophyte or neo for the first year after their initiation or until another line is initiated in the chapter.

New Member: A woman or man who has accepted a fraternity or sorority bid in a CPC or IFC organization.

New Member Pin: A distinctive insignia worn on the chest designating a new member of a particular fraternity or sorority for the period of time between bid acceptance and initiation.

New Member Education Period: The period of time before initiation when new members learn about their fraternity or sorority.

Philanthropy: Fundraising projects sponsored by fraternities or sororities supporting local and inter/national charitable organizations.
Potential New Members: An individual participating in recruitment.

Panhellenic Counselor (Pi Chi): A CPC sorority member who has disaffiliated from her sorority during recruitment to assist potential members through the formal recruitment process.

Probate/New Member Presentation: Event when newly initiated members of an NPHC or cultural-based organization perform step routines, salute, and recite historical information and greetings as their first introduction to campus.

Prophyte: An older member of an NPHC or cultural-based organization. A neophyte becomes a prophyte after one year or when another line is initiated.

Quota: The maximum number each NPC sorority may invite to become members during the formal recruitment process.

Recommendation: A letter or statement written by an alumna/alumni to the chapter of their organization on this campus recommending a potential member for a bid offering. It is the responsibility of the sorority to obtain the recommendations, but the potential member may also ask an alumna/alumni to write a letter.

Recruitment: The process by which potential new members are introduced to the fraternity and sorority community at Western Carolina University and have the opportunity to interact with and get to know fraternity and sorority members.

Soror: Member(s) of the same sorority. Used in NPHC functions to refer to any sorority woman.

Sorority: A Greek – letter sisterhood.

Step Show: An aspect of NPHC fraternities and sororities characterized by synchronized hand and foot movements, along with singing, dancing, chanting, and acting.

Strolling: Coordinated movements done in a line by NPHC to show unity. It is often demonstrated at social gatherings or during step shows.