

Why should I join a fraternity or sorority?

There are many reasons why a student should join a fraternity or sorority. The best person to ask this question is a fraternity or sorority member. If one asks enough members, one will see that each person has a unique reason. The common themes, though, are as follows:

- Friendship
- leadership development
- access to new events and programs
- a chance to connect to a larger organization that exists on other campuses
- a support network
- developing skills and acquiring experiences for career or graduate school
- encourages more involvement with the University
- community service opportunities
- potential career network
- an association of life long friends that continues to exist beyond the college years

Where can I find more information about the fraternity and sorority system?

Office of Fraternities and Sororities
308 Student Union Building.
www.umass.edu/greek



FAQ about Fraternities and Sororities



Office of Fraternities and Sororities
Center for Student Development

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FAQ about Fraternities and Sororities

What is a fraternity or sorority?

Fraternities (men) and sororities (women) are student associations – often referred to as secret, Greek-lettered societies. Fraternities and sororities have been part of the higher education landscape for almost two centuries. The first fraternity at the University (then Massachusetts Agricultural College) was in 1869, and the first sorority was founded in 1916. Most fraternities and sororities are affiliated with a national organization, although our campus hosts two UMASS-Amherst only chapters – often called “locals”. Social fraternities and sororities should not be confused with the many academic and honor societies that operate on the campus.

How does a student join a fraternity or sorority?

Each fraternity or sorority has some type of recruitment process. The Panhellenic sororities conduct a formal recruitment at the beginning of the fall semester and informal recruitment in the spring semester. The IFC fraternities, the NPHC and multicultural fraternities and sororities will do recruitment throughout the year. Most chapters or the governing councils will post flyers, use Facebook, sponsor information sessions, and advertise events in *The Daily Collegian*.

Can anybody join a fraternity or sorority?

Fraternity membership is open to all fulltime undergraduate students; although some chapters are open to students from the Five Colleges. However, fraternities and sororities do have a selection process, so it is best to check out every chapter to find the best match. Some chapters have requirements that must be met before one may be considered for membership: grade point averages, semester hours, etc.

If I join a fraternity or sorority, do I have to live in the chapter house?

Not every chapter on campus has a fraternity facility. For those with facilities, each one has its own housing requirements. First year students are not allowed to move into a chapter facility (University policy).

If I join a chapter, am I going to be hazed?

Hazing is a violation of Commonwealth laws, University policies, (see the *Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities*), and every fraternity and sorority policy. Most chapters have a new member program (*a.k.a. pledge program*) where one learns what it means to be a member of the chapter. This is usually a 6-8 week program. Once the program is completed, new members are initiated into full membership. In addition to the hazing policy, all University policies apply to the fraternity and sorority system.

How much does it cost to be in a fraternity or sorority?

Each chapter sets its own fees for joining. There are usually national dues, an initiation fee, and local costs. Housing costs are comparable to on-campus but do vary from chapter to chapter.

Who oversees the fraternity and sorority system?

The Office of Fraternities and Sororities, a part of the Center for Student Development, oversees and advises the fraternity and sorority system. The office has advisors who work with the chapters and the governing councils. Most chapters also have their own volunteers that assist and advise them. There are four governing councils, an honor society, and a community service organization:

Panhellenic Council
Interfraternity Council
UMASS National Pan-Hellenic Council
Multicultural Greek Council
Order of Omega Honor Society
UDance (Children’s Miracle Network)

Information about the councils and the member chapters can be found at www.umass.edu/greek/



UDANCE