



September 8, 2020

Dear Panhellenic and broader Campus Community,

We, UCLA Panhellenic Executive Board and UCLA Panhellenic Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), aim to cultivate a welcoming and uplifting Panhellenic community that is accessible to all women. We acknowledge that improving recruitment is an essential initial step in creating an inclusive environment, as recruitment is Potential New Members' (PNMs') entrance into the Panhellenic community. This letter outlines our recommendations for a more inclusive recruitment.

### *Community Demographic Statistics*

We recently published available demographic statistics for the UCLA Panhellenic student body from 2016-2019 (see [here](#)). We acknowledge these statistics are not the only indicators of diversity, but demographics data offer objective measures of diversity, allowing us to better identify areas for improvement. The disparities between the UCLA undergraduate student body and the UCLA Panhellenic community clearly reveal a history of racial exclusion and a disproportionate level of white membership. Panhellenic must aim to overcome this by engaging in inclusive practices, including recruitment efforts. By emphasizing inclusion as a precedent to diversity, rather than continue to perpetuate member tokenism and exclusion under the guise of a diverse, but not inclusive, membership, recruitment practices can begin to work against these harmful and derogatory patterns. Indeed, inclusion *leads to* diversity.

### *Legacy & Recommendation Policies*

When Panhellenic organizations emerged on college campuses in the nineteenth century, both formal and informal racist practices and policies excluded students of color from higher education, resulting in historically white fraternity and sorority communities.<sup>1</sup> As such, Panhellenic rituals and practices were built upon white ideals and perspectives; many of which remain to this day. Legacy and recommendation policies have perpetuated racial exclusion by giving preferential treatment to PNMs with existing ties to Panhellenic, which has significantly benefited white women and others with privilege, as white women were the original members of these organizations and thus established a history of legacy within them.<sup>2</sup> This summer, more than half of the 26 national Panhellenic member organizations are ending or reviewing such policies. UCLA Panhellenic strongly encourages all chapters to collaborate with representatives of their national organization to remove preferential treatment of legacies and will actively

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<sup>1</sup> Gillon, Kathleen E., et al. "Race and Racism in Fraternity and Sorority Life: A Historical Overview." *New Directions for Student Services*, vol. 2019, no. 165, 2019, pp. 9–16. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20289>.

<sup>2</sup> "NPC Diversity Equity Inclusion." National Panhellenic Conference. Retrieved from: [www.npcwomen.org/priorities/npc-diversity-equity-inclusion/](http://www.npcwomen.org/priorities/npc-diversity-equity-inclusion/).

support chapters throughout this process. UCLA Panhellenic will inform PNMs of which chapters are ending these policies through our website, and chapters are encouraged to publicize their own statements on why they will no longer partake in these policies.

### *Finances*

We recognize that chapter financial requirements pose a substantial barrier to membership, and that these requirements can be prohibitive for PNMs. Financial transparency is crucial for Panhellenic members to make informed decisions about financial commitments, and all chapter members should be prepared to address any questions regarding expense throughout the recruitment process. Chapters should ensure that they are not only publicly providing information about mandatory dues, but also regarding hidden and surprise fees (i.e., fees that are not mandatory but often suggested, such as apparel, fines, or optional events), payment plans, scholarship opportunities, and any other relevant financial information. Chapters should be equipped with this information and educate its members on this topic in order to readily address any inquiries PNMs may have. Chapter dues and further information on typical hidden/surprise fees will be provided in a consistent and clear format on the [UCLA Panhellenic Website](#).

Recruitment fees may be waived by [emailing VP Membership](#) and having a brief conversation with her over Zoom to discuss the reasons for a fee waiver and the long term financial commitment of the Panhellenic community; this request and conversation is kept completely confidential between the PNM, VP Membership, President and Panhellenic Advisor and will not impact the PNM's recruitment experience. Chapters, their membership, chapter advisors, members of the Recruitment Team, and Executive Board members will not have access to the names of PNMs who have these conversations or the content of these discussions, nor will any indication be made on the PNM's profile that they engaged in this conversation.

UCLA Panhellenic has actively reevaluated spending on recruitment operations to increase Panhellenic scholarship funds and aim to be transparent with recruitment spending. Due to lower costs of virtual recruitment this year and in an effort to make recruitment more accessible, the Recruitment Team was able to reduce recruitment expenses by 80% (compared to years prior) and reduce this year's registration fee from \$80-100 in prior years to \$15 this fall.<sup>3</sup> We will urge future Panhellenic Recruitment Teams to critically evaluate recruitment expenses and work to maintain reduced registration fees for future recruitment cycles in order to increase accessibility. Furthermore, we encourage chapters to engage in conversations with advisors and representatives of their national organization about where dues are currently being allocated and propose areas for reduction/reallocation as necessary. Chapters are also encouraged to reach out to their alumnae networks and national organization contacts, with the support of the Panhellenic Executive Board, to create scholarships for their membership.

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<sup>3</sup> Recruitment team consists of VP Membership, Panhellenic President, Executive Vice President, Rho Gamma Coordinator, Recruitment Logistics Coordinator, and Panhellenic Advisor. Reductions to registration fee were made in collaboration with VP Finance.

### *Attire*

In accordance with [UCLA Panhellenic Recruitment Rules](#), chapters should not require or prohibit aspects of their members' attire, including but not limited to hairstyle and make-up requirements.<sup>4</sup> Members should feel free to show their individual style and personality through their attire choices both during recruitment and throughout their membership. Chapters are discouraged from requiring their members to purchase new attire for the purposes of recruitment, and attire featuring brand logos or other brand distinction is strongly discouraged. Chapters should ensure that recruitment language promotes inclusivity and is not centered around a white ideal of beauty (e.g., removing terms like “nude heels” and “natural hair”). Similarly, it should be made known to both chapter members and PNMs that under no circumstances will personal styling choices (e.g., braids, spray tans, heat styling, etc.) be either required nor prohibited.

### *Equity & Diversity Education*

In order to contribute to an inclusive community, Panhellenic women should actively educate themselves on anti-racism and listen to different viewpoints both within and outside of the Panhellenic community. A list of general anti-racism resources we have compiled for self-education can be found [here](#). Education within chapters and between members must occur prior to recruitment on relevant topics, including Panhellenic history, implicit biases, and microaggressions, for certain groupings of Panhellenic constituents (including chapter recruiting officers, Rho Gammas, and PNMs). During group discussions with Rho Gammas (i.e., volunteer counselors supporting PNM's throughout recruitment), PNMs will be educated on this history of the Panhellenic community and myths regarding recruitment (e.g., which taboo topics should not be taboo, such as financial concern or passions for political causes), protocol for reporting incidents of discrimination, and extensive details about financial obligations, to set a precedent for UCLA Panhellenic's stance on equity, diversity, and inclusion. UCLA Panhellenic is working to recruit outside experts trained in the areas of anti-racism and inclusion to inform members about our organization's history, discriminatory practices, and steps moving forward prior to recruitment and into the school year. The emphasis of these workshops will be to grasp a strong understanding of Panhellenic's past in order to take on future action with intent and purpose through bystander intervention, individual and group accountability, and ongoing participation in these areas.

### *Open Communication*

Although placing time constraints on conversations can limit a full understanding of individuals' complexities and worldviews, we encourage PNMs to nonetheless feel comfortable in discussing any and all subjects that are reflective of their values. UCLA Panhellenic would

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<sup>4</sup> See “Current Panhellenic Recruitment Rules” at <https://www.uclapanhellenic.com/bylaws-documents>.

like to formally dispel the misconception that certain topics, such as politics and finances, are themes to be avoided during recruitment. We encourage PNMs to engage in authentic conversation that allows for a holistic understanding of their identity and experience, without fear of rejection or judgment by chapters. Likewise, chapter members are encouraged to engage in these conversations, provided there are overlapping interests and, when there is respectful disagreement, to acknowledge the PNM's perspective and maintain a positive and productive discussion. For this reason, chapters are encouraged to pair PNMs with current members on account of common interests, passions, and activities. The pairing process should *not* take into any identity that is not chosen or a part of their specific explicit interests (i.e., race, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geographical location, or ability).

Though we advocate for openness and authenticity, maintaining respect for personal privacy is imperative, and women should not feel pressured to divulge information about their identities and experiences that may be difficult to discuss with new individuals in the context of Panhellenic recruitment. The goal of a values-based recruitment is not to create homogeneous organizations, but rather to be open and welcoming to women with diverse perspectives and aligned values.

### *Zoom Recruitment*

Although virtual recruitment may pose new challenges, it can allow conversations to be the center of focus, as some distractions can be eliminated and personal biases minimized. For example, the first round of recruitment aims to standardize the recruitment experience by requesting interviews in which PNMs and chapter representatives both answer the same questions. During conversations on Zoom, we encourage both PNMs and current members to find locations with neutral backgrounds (examples will be posted on our website). If that is not available, PNMs and current members can choose to utilize provided Zoom backgrounds, which will be provided on our website. Neutral backgrounds are suggested to amplify the importance of the conversation rather than what's physically on the screen. Chapter members should not evaluate PNMs based on their Zoom background, WiFi connection, or other technological factors. If technical complications arise and PNMs miss a significant amount of the round, they will be able to attend a later party once the connection is resolved.

### *Panhellenic Accountability & Solidarity for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*

UCLA Panhellenic is currently working to establish a permanent accountability system to go into effect during recruitment and remain as an active part of community operations. This system aims to ensure chapters, members, and other individuals continue to hold the UCLA Panhellenic community accountable in their actions and words from this point forward. During recruitment, PNMs can report EDI-related instances (e.g., instance of microaggression, overt discrimination, or derogatory action) to their respective Rho Gamma. Rho Gammas will then assist the PNM in completing a College Panhellenic Violation Report form, fully describing the

incident. This form will be given to the Panhellenic Recruitment Team to determine the appropriate response, including direct mediation with the chapter leadership or, in some cases, advisor or higher personnel. The minimum response to such violations will be a follow-up with each reported party regarding the situation. Chapter members can report violations against them as well by filling out the same form with their Chapter Recruitment Team, which will likewise be addressed by the Panhellenic Recruitment Team. These issues to be held accountable may also be brought to the attention of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee after mediation. Step-by-step protocol for reporting can be found [here](#). Chapters will be informed on these operations, and PNMs will be provided with information detailing this process as they go through recruitment.<sup>5</sup>

The Panhellenic community will only see improvements with collective efforts and unified cooperation between and within chapters. We encourage all chapters to publicize their respective equity, diversity, and inclusive initiatives on their website/social media platforms, in part to inform PNMs of tangible actions being taken for necessary progress. UCLA Panhellenic will also be updating the website with these chapter-specific and collaborative initiatives. If and when issues arise when enacting equity, diversity, and inclusive initiatives, the UCLA Panhellenic Executive Board; Panhellenic Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; and [Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life \(OFSL\) Staff Advisors](#) are here to support and help facilitate and mediate conversations. As we all do our part, be mindful of the reasons *why* we must strive for inclusion, and remember that this is an ongoing process.

Sincerely,

*UCLA Panhellenic Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee &  
UCLA Panhellenic Executive Board*

Any feedback/questions are welcomed and can be directed to the facilitators of EDIC who oversee these guidelines: Kara Portier ([npcbruins.vpwellness@gmail.com](mailto:npcbruins.vpwellness@gmail.com)) or Lilly Maxfield ([programming.pan.ucla@gmail.com](mailto:programming.pan.ucla@gmail.com)).

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<sup>5</sup> Additional information can be found in [Article XI of Panhellenic Bylaws](#), which details how the violation process works.