

# **The National Pan-Hellenic Council**

The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc.  
Virginia LeBlanc, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. shall be to foster cooperative actions of its members in dealing with matters of mutual concern. To this end, the NPHC promotes the well-being of its affiliate fraternities and sororities, facilitates the establishment and development of local councils of the NPHC and provides leadership training for its constituents.

## **What is the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)?**

The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated is currently composed of nine (9) International Greek letter Sororities and Fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Phi Psi Fraternity, Inc. The NPHC promotes interaction through forums, meetings and other mediums for the exchange of information and engages in cooperative programming and initiatives through various activities and functions.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council was organized in May 1930 at Howard University, in Washington, DC. Charter members include Kappa Alpha Psi and Omega Psi Phi Fraternities, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, and Zeta Phi Beta Sororities. In 1931, Alpha Phi Alpha and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternities joined the Council. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority joined in 1937 and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity completed the list of member organizations in 1997.

The stated purpose and mission of the organization in 1930 was "Unanimity of thought and action as far as possible in the conduct of Greek letter collegiate fraternities and sororities, and to consider problems of mutual interest to its member organizations." Early in 1937, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois and became known as "The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated."

## **National Pan-Hellenic Council Mission Statement**

The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is an organization which facilitates the collaborative agenda of its affiliate organizations.

## **National Pan-Hellenic Council Objectives**

In the furtherance of the Mission Statement, NPHC recognizes the following objectives.

NPHC:

1. Assists in establishing and facilitating local councils on campuses and within communities wherein chapters of member fraternities and sororities are located.

2. Serves as the communication link between/among these constituent fraternities and sororities, especially in matters such as scheduling workshops and national meetings.
3. Conducts periodic workshops or training sessions with the officers of the local councils to ensure a clear understanding of common operational procedures.
4. Conducts regional conferences on a biennial basis as a means of developing operational efficiency and promoting program effectiveness.
5. Conducts a NPHC National Convention/Undergraduate Leadership Conference of the active membership, including officers and delegates of the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the constituent local councils.
6. Works cooperatively with and contributes to other community groups. These include such agencies as the National Black Leadership Roundtable, the National Coalition of Black Voter Participation, NAACP, The Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women, United Negro College Fund, North-American Interfraternity Conference, National Panhellenic Conference, National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, Association of Fraternity Advisors, Fraternity Executives Association, Congressional Black Caucus among others.
7. Provides unity and economic empowerment through and by the member organizations.
8. Performs such other coordinating functions as set forth within the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Pan-Hellenic Council or as determined by the Executive Board of the NPHC, Inc.

### **Why the Tradition Must Continue On College Campuses?**

To understand the need for and concept of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., one must first consider, understand and familiarize oneself with the historical accounts and significance of predominantly Black Greek-letter organizations. While having their own distinct heritages, the nine (9) member organizations of NPHC offer insight and a unique perspective into this understanding and the development of Black socioeconomic and cultural life.

Each of the nine (9) NPHC organizations evolved during a period when African Americans were being denied essential rights and privileges afforded others. Racial isolation on predominantly white campuses and social barriers of class on all campuses created a need for African Americans to align themselves with other individuals sharing common goals and ideals. With the realization of such a need, the African American (Black) Greek-lettered organization movement took on the personae of a haven and outlet, which could foster brotherhood and sisterhood in the pursuit to bring about social change through the development of social programs that would create positive change for Blacks and the country. Today the need remains the same.

While NPHC affiliate organizations recognize the social aspect of fraternity/sorority college life, the primary purpose and focus of member organizations remains community awareness and action through educational, economic and cultural Fraternity & Sorority service activities. NPHC affiliates and their respective members have pledged to devote their resources to service in their respective communities, realizing that the membership experience of NPHC organizations goes beyond organizational membership during an individual's college career. A lifetime commitment to the goals and ideals of each respective organization is stressed. The individual member is also expected to align themselves with a graduate/alumni chapter following graduation from college, with the expectation that he/she will attend regular chapter meetings, regional conferences and national conventions and take an active part in matters concerning and affecting the community in which he or she lives.

The need to form campus-based councils to represent NPHC affiliate organizations is not motivated by a "separatist" philosophy. The establishment of councils assists in maintaining a distinct identity as "service based organizations," as opposed to organizations that may be strictly social in nature. NPHC, Inc. does not advocate a disassociation from NIC, NPC or NALFO organizations on college campuses. The council's purpose is to promote unity and expose members to the "service for life" philosophy and foster leadership development and scholarship. Furthermore, the National Pan-Hellenic Council provides a forum for participation and interaction among the members of affiliate organizations and the organizations themselves. It provides for a stronger unified voice and a stronger unified body. The continued advocacy for the establishment of local councils not only stems from tradition, but also from the realization that many colleges and universities maintain organization registration policies that require an organization to belong to a national organization if it wants to function on that campus. Additionally, the national organization is required to be a member of a national umbrella organization.

It is the endeavor of NPHC, Inc. to foster a more stable environment on campuses for affiliate chapters, provide a forum for dialogue and provide training for and management of it's respective organizations. Having such an entity in place to serve as an umbrella organization centralizes and provides a distinguishable clearinghouse for information, and in some cases, a national spokes-body in matters involving its constituency, whether on the university/college campus and/or in civic, social and political arenas. It is essential to have such a voice to advocate concerns of local councils and assert the position of the national body, particularly in decisions or rulings that may negatively affect affiliates.

## **NPHC STRUCTURE**

- There shall be a Council of Presidents, which shall have authority on all matters.
- There shall be a National Convention, which shall elect officers for the ensuing term and perform such other duties as may hereinafter be described.
- There shall be an Executive Board of Directors, subject in all respects to the Council of Presidents of the NPHC.

- The Executive Board of Directors shall have the authority to establish geographical groupings when deemed necessary.
- The Executive Board of Directors shall establish undergraduate and alumni councils of the NPHC.
- Undergraduate and Graduate councils of the NPHC shall become a part of the respective region in which they are located; if such a region exists.

### ***COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS***

#### **Authority**

The supreme governing authority of the NPHC shall be vested in the Council of Presidents.

#### **Composition**

The Council of Presidents shall be composed of the elected president of each affiliate member fraternity or sorority or the authorized representative thereof, who shall be designated by the president of the respective fraternity or sorority and shall represent the fraternity or sorority in the absence of the president.

#### **Responsibilities**

The Council of Presidents shall be responsible for the broad general policies of the NPHC and for instructing the Executive Board of Directors regarding activities to be executed on behalf of the NPHC.

### ***EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS***

#### **Scope of Authority**

The executive and administrative powers of the Council of Presidents shall be vested in the Executive Board of Directors.

#### **Composition**

The NPHC Executive Board of Directors shall be composed of twenty-three (23) directors. Six (6) directors shall be elected national officers. Five (5) regional directors and nine (9) Executive Directors of the affiliate fraternities and sororities shall also be members. The NPHC Executive Director, the NPHC General Counsel and the NPHC Immediate Past President, by virtue of position, shall serve as the remaining Board of Directors. The Immediate Past President, if in good standing, shall serve as a voting director, without regard to any other provision of the Constitution and Bylaws, which limits the term of service as a director.

### **NPHC REGIONAL STRUCTURE**

The NPHC has five regions (Eastern, North Central, Southern, Southwestern and Western), which provide guidance and governance for undergraduate and alumni councils. In addition to providing information and service, these regions conduct biennial conferences with undergraduate and alumni councils and also recommend appropriate legislation for action at the General Convention. Each region has the responsibility of assuring that the councils' operation and sections are in accord with the mandate of the General Convention.

The regional director also coordinates the implementation of regional programs and establishes a working relationship with the regional directors and/or representatives of the nine affiliate organizations.

## **TYPES OF COUNCILS**

### **Councils in the NPHC are in two categories:**

Graduate (Alumni) Councils - comprised of two or more affiliate organization chapters. Members of the local NPHC council must be financial with their respective affiliate chapter and international organizations.

Undergraduate (Collegiate) Councils - comprised of two or more affiliate chapters located on college/university campuses. The members of the campus NPHC are undergraduate students who are financial members with their respective affiliate chapter and international organizations.

### **Naming Your Council:**

Graduate Council - The local graduate council of NPHC shall be designated as The National Pan-Hellenic Council at/of the name of the city/town/area. (Example: "The National Pan-Hellenic Council at/of Fresno")

Undergraduate Council - The undergraduate council is designated as The National Pan-Hellenic Council at/of the college/university name. (Example: "The National Pan-Hellenic Council at/of [the] University of Arizona")

## **PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL**

The purpose of the Council shall be: to create and maintain high standards in the life and ideals of fraternities and sororities; to perpetuate constructive fraternity and sorority relationships; to foster an understanding of the structure and method of operation among affiliate organizations; to address, coordinate, and develop action strategies on matters of mutual concern to affiliate organizations, and to serve as the conduit for such action plans as may be developed.

### **NPHC Councils on college campuses provide(s):**

- Preservation of the cultural heritage of the historically African American Greek-letter Organizations
- Adequate and effective representation of the African American Greek-lettered organizations
- A forum for addressing items of mutual interest and concern to the NPHC organizations

- A minority view on majority campuses
- An experience of self-governance necessary to the development of the emergent leaders
- An organization that does not base fines, assessments and penalties on unrealistic membership goals or housing policies.
- Uniformed membership intake procedures and standards of conduct for NPHC organizations
- A body able to recommend changes in legislation to the national body

**NPHC organizations as Graduate councils provide:**

- A framework for joint community service projects and other activities and functions
- A forum for the discussion of common goals and items of mutual interest and concern among the nine affiliate member organizations
- A network for the promotion of continued social progress
- A body able to recommend changes in legislation to the national body

**MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT**

Specific activities are geared toward the recruitment of new members by Greek letter organizations. While many college or university administrations have definite and prescribed times and procedures for Greek-letter organizations to engage in recruitment activities, there is no regulation that prevents chapter members from being positive role models on a continuing day-to-day basis on and off campus.

Freshmen and other new students shall receive up-to-date information about sororities and fraternities as they are in existence on a given campus. Local National Pan-Hellenic Councils shall specify the formal and informal recruitment rules and make the same available to all member chapters, in cooperation with the college/university administration.

There shall be no more than two (2) specified recruitment periods each year, fall and spring. It is suggested that the recruitment activities for each period be confined to no more than one week.

**NPHC groups uphold the following guidelines for recruitment:**

- No sorority or fraternity shall approach any potential member who has indicated a preference for a group other than theirs with a proposal to refuse and wait for another invitation.

- It is in accord with dignity and good manners of Greek-letter men and women:
- To avoid disparaging remarks about other college students or Greek-letter organizations
- To create friendly relations between fraternal and non-fraternal students
- To publicize only those things which are dignified, worthwhile and uplifting
- NPHC organizations do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, physical challenge or sexual orientation.

## **POLICY & POSITION STATEMENTS**

### **Substance Abuse**

The NPHC is concerned about the governing problem of substance abuse through the consumption of alcohol and the use of drugs, especially on college campuses. This is due to the alarming number of disastrous incidents in which alcohol and drugs play a part and the adverse health conditions caused by and relating to substance abuse.

The NPHC position is that the sale or consumption of alcohol or drugs at any NPHC council sponsored event on campus or at any student's residence or other facility is strictly prohibited.

NPHC strongly suggests that every undergraduate council offer educational programs specifically addressing the problems of and solutions to substance abuse on or around the local campus.

### **Step Shows & Conduct**

The National Pan-Hellenic Council recognizes that "step shows" are a creative and unique form of artistic and musical entertainment, especially at the undergraduate level. At most colleges and universities, students who are members of fraternities and sororities participate in such forms of entertainment as a means to promote and enhance the image of their respective fraternal organization and to showcase the talent of their membership. Step shows provide students, parents, faculty members, college and university officials and the public a forum to better understand the unique culture (e.g., history and traditions) of African American fraternities and sororities. Such cultural expressions may also have the potential for individuals to form opinions about the values and beliefs of local fraternities and sororities, as language, behavior and symbols send strong messages. Additionally, it is plausible that step shows help prospective members become more informed about the organization in which they seek membership. Step shows have the potential to be a source of marketing African American fraternities and sororities.

For fraternity and sorority members, many step shows help create an environment conducive to intra and inter-group fellowship. This bonding may be particularly valuable to

African American students matriculating at predominately White institutions, where many of these students feel isolated and perceive a lack of emotional support. Although step shows enhance the undergraduate experience, they should not involve the degradation and/or belittlement of any other Greek-letter organizations, including fraternities and sororities affiliated with the NPHC, North-American Interfraternity Conference, National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations and the National Panhellenic Conference. Furthermore, step shows, which take the form of dancing, singing and/or skits, should not be performed using lewd, indecent or obscene behavior. Although freedom of expression is valued by the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., performances of such reproach are not only inconsistent with the negative stereotyping which often overshadows the positive philanthropic and global projects undertaken by NPHC organizations.

The nine national presidents of the historically African American NPHC fraternities and sororities strongly urge undergraduates to consider positive themes when developing step shows. Such shows can highlight famous African American contributions to society. When skits are performed, they should be developed to convey positive political, social justice and moral messages. The NPHC invites local councils and affiliated organizations to send creative, alternative step show ideas to the NPHC International Headquarters for widespread exchange of artistic and musical expression.

### **Elimination of Pledging**

In a historic step, leaders of the first eight member organizations and the National President of the National Pan-Hellenic Council met in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 16, 1990, and agreed to bring an end to pledging as a solution to the rampant outbreak of hazing.

Rationale: Membership in NPHC affiliate organizations is based upon the possession of qualifications by the aspirant, rather than upon a pledge period of activities.

Recommendations: (1.) There shall be no "pledging" or "pre-pledging" process in any of the constituent organizations comprising the National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations, (2.) Each organization shall develop its own membership intake process, which shall be limited to the ceremonial ritual(s) of the respective organization, and (3.) Each organization shall develop its own educational process to follow the ceremonial ritual(s). All NPHC member organizations legally adopted changes reflecting the St. Louis decision, beginning in the fall semester of 1990 through 1991.

### **SERVICES PROVIDED BY NPHC**

- Monitors and shares information about federal and state legislative and regulatory activities and other matters of mutual concern to NPHC affiliates.
- Spearheads joint action by NPHC affiliates where appropriate and maintains active and open communication with the executive offices of each of the affiliates.

- Publishes national and regional newsletters, which allow NPHC undergraduate and alumni councils to exchange ideas and resources.
- Conducts national and regional workshops on issues specific to NPHC member councils.
- Serves as a resource sharing body and engages in dialogue and partnerships with other Greek-letter organizations, associations and college/university administrators regarding current issues.
- Provides sample bylaws and rules of operation for graduate and undergraduate councils. The Regional Director works directly with graduate and undergraduate councils and advises them on standards of conduct and constitutional revisions.
- Provides consultation to local councils and colleges/universities on NPHC issues.
- Assists the member organizations in meeting their individual objectives.
- Conducts awards programs to recognize local councils, member organizations along with non-affiliate individuals and organizations which have been instrumental in the furtherance of the NPHC philosophy.
- Conducts regional and national conventions, which provide the opportunity for NPHC members to interact and exchange ideas and solutions to common concerns.

Visit the NPHC web site at [www.nphchq.org](http://www.nphchq.org).

Reference:

From *Advising Fraternities and Sororities Manual*. Association of Fraternity Advisors.