



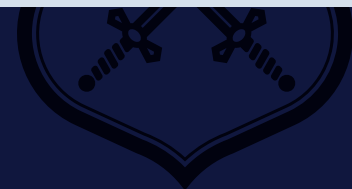
— PHI DELTA THETA

# 10 Questions to Ask

If Your Child Wants to Join a Fraternity or Sorority in College



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**Y**ou've spent nearly two decades in perhaps the toughest, yet most rewarding role of your life—raising a child and providing a great foundation for a successful life. The effort that goes into parenting is immeasurable, and because of that investment, parents want the absolute best for their children.

For many families, the transition from high school to college can be filled with great emotion: excitement, pride, stress, fear, hope. Such emotions are all valid and are similar to what your child is feeling.

College is an opportunity for personal growth, building new relationships, exposing oneself to new education and views, and preparing for a successful future. Each institution of higher education is unique and has different approaches to creating an environment to help your child achieve these things. College is not perfect, but there is nothing like it to prepare your child for a greater tomorrow.

While your child might be moving out of the house for the first time, and perhaps moving far away from you, your involvement and guidance as a parent is as important in the upcoming years as it has been up until this point. Yes, your child is naturally going to become more independent each year, but today's generation is more connected than any preceding generation, and they welcome continual guidance and mentorship.

Once on campus, your child may become interested in fraternities and sororities within the Greek community. At surface level, most students are in search of a sense of belonging in their new environment, people with whom to socialize, even simply a place to live. Digging deeper, fraternities and sororities can become an extended family, filled with leadership, mentorship, service, and social opportunities for your child, centered around noble values.

Fraternities and sororities work diligently to educate their members about negative cultural factors that are present on college campuses (i.e. alcohol and drug abuse, hazing, sexual assault). The ultimate goal of this education is to minimize risky behavior that leads to bad decisions.

Those involved in the Greek community understand why parental concern is present when their sons or daughters show interest in joining a fraternity or sorority. It's an important decision, and parental involvement and research is encouraged to help guide that decision.

To assist, consider the questions that follow as some of the most important your family can ask about the fraternity or sorority your child is deliberating.





## 1 How is the chapter supported by adults?

The best fraternity and sorority chapters are surrounded by a team of engaged advisers. Advisers can come in many forms within the Greek community, including local advisory boards and housing corporation officers, regional volunteers and staff support from the inter/national organization, on-campus fraternity and sorority life advisers who are employees of the institution, and even live-in advisers who call the chapter facility home.

Reach out to the organization's headquarters and ask for a comprehensive list of advisers who support the chapter. Make a few calls to these individuals to learn more about how they support the chapter.

## 2 What are the financial expectations of joining the organization?

College is expensive, and many potential new members and their families worry about how additional fraternity or sorority dues may add to the bill and whether a return on investment is present. Inter/national fraternities and sororities have new member fees, initiation fees, and annual membership dues for each member. The local chapter will have its own fees that accompany this to help with programs, events, insurance, etc. Chapters with a facility on campus may add room and board costs into the financial expectations. Simply put, each chapter has a unique total cost, but it's important to have a clear understanding of that cost before a membership decision is made.

Ask for a breakdown of the costs, the billing timeline, any options for payment plans, and how membership dues are used within the chapter's operations.

## 3 What does the new member education (pledging) process look like?

If you were to ask every fraternity and sorority headquarters about their main focuses, the majority would include educating and safeguarding around the new member education period. New members should be celebrated and treated with the utmost respect and the activities involved in the pledging period should reflect this. No inter/national fraternity or sorority supports activities that could be considered hazing, but it's

important to ask questions about your child's new member period.

Ask to see an outline of the chapter's new member education program.

Ask for the name of the new member educator and an adviser who can be contacted if there are concerns.



## 4 How does the chapter encourage academic success?

College is a time to get an education, and academic success should be a main priority of any fraternity or sorority chapter. Fraternities and sororities can be a catalyst for academic success for your child, being surrounded by others who can offer mentorship and accountability. Most chapters will have GPA minimums and requirements to join and remain as a member. Academic programs that work towards a shared goal are also often present.

**Ask the fraternity and sorority life office on your child's campus for the current chapter GPA rankings.**

**Ask the chapter about its academic expectations and programs.**

## 5 How does the chapter engage families during the year?

Family engagement should be welcomed in your child's fraternity or sorority experience. Similarly, consistent communication and discussion about the experience amongst your family is encouraged. Many opportunities should be available for you to interact with your child's fraternity or sorority experience including family weekends, homecoming, parents club activity, periodic communications from the chapter, or even the chance to serve on the chapter's advisory board.

**Ask the chapter about how it engages families throughout the year and ask for the contact information for a few parents of members to hear their perspectives.**



Hear from other parents: [phide.it/parentvideo](https://phide.it/parentvideo)

## 6 Is diversity celebrated within the chapter?

One of the greatest benefits to college life is being surrounded by a diverse collection of people, cultures, and beliefs. Upon graduation, your child will enter a workforce that is more diverse than ever before, and career ascension will be directly related to the ability to work effectively with people of all types. Fraternity and sorority chapters should encourage a diverse intake of new members, and their rosters should be a microcosm of the school's population.

**Ask a chapter about their efforts to build a diverse membership roster.**



## 7 How important is community and campus involvement to the chapter?

Research has shown that in general, members of fraternities and sororities are more engaged on campus and within the local community than their non-Greek peers, and this translates into a higher level of giving back to the campus community after graduation. Leadership and service are both very important within fraternities and sororities, and this can be seen through heightened involvement in student organizations and with philanthropic causes.

**Ask the chapter about its members' leadership accomplishments on campus and what percentage of its members are involved in a student organization on campus.**

**Ask the chapter about its community service and philanthropic activity (hours served, dollars raised) and why it's important to them.**

## 8 What is the alcohol policy within the chapter facility?

More than 60 percent of fraternity and sorority undergraduate members are below the legal drinking age of twenty-one. For years, all sororities have celebrated alcohol-free housing policies, and they have thrived within this environment. The trend is moving this way for fraternities. Fraternities and sororities are in the business of developing young collegians into greater versions of themselves. To accomplish this, the living environment for their members should support this and remove unnecessary risk for illegal activity. The great majority of issues within the Greek community (and on college campuses as a whole) start with alcohol.

**Ask the chapter about its policies surrounding alcohol in the chapter facility.**

**Ask a representative from the inter/national organization about its alcohol policies.**





## 9 Does the chapter have a history of discipline?

If a chapter has a history of discipline within the organization or on campus, it's important to understand the details surrounding the situation(s) and the actions that have been taken by the chapter since. Inter/national organizations and the fraternity and sorority life office on campus can provide historical context about its chapters and details about progress that has been made. An emerging trend in some state law is a requirement to list all campus violations publicly. The fraternity and sorority life office on your child's campus might have such listing.

**Ask the Inter/national organization and fraternity and sorority life office on campus for a history of the chapter.**

## 10 Is the Inter/national organization adapting to today's students and issues?

The inter/national office of a fraternity or sorority determines the strategy, messaging, standards, policies, programs, and resource allocation surrounding the organization's vision for the future. Each organization is unique and has strengths and weaknesses, but all should be encouraged to continuously refine their value proposition to today's generation in a manner than leads with integrity. It's important to understand what an organization can offer your child, and you can learn a great deal about an organization and its leaders on its website and social media platforms.



**Ask the inter/national organization for its strategic plan and the collection of programs and experiences that can benefit your child.**

Asking these questions if and when your child is considering membership in a fraternity or sorority will provide great education and comfort surrounding a decision about membership. We also encourage your son or daughter to ask many of these same questions during the recruitment process.

Fraternities and sororities become better organizations when the families of their members are engaged in the experience. During the upcoming years, your child will grow and become independent, and it will make you quite proud. Part of that growth will be a greater realization of how their family worked so hard to help get them to this stage in life. For that, you should be celebrated.









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