

A Discussion Guide for Parents & Students

Administrators at Southern Utah University want and encourage parents to be involved in their son or daughter's decision to join a fraternity or sorority. **Discussing this decision with your student is imperative** and the experience your son or daughter has will be much better if you are comfortable with their participation in a Greek-letter organization. The following topics should be part of your discussion as you contemplate whether or not joining a fraternity or sorority is the right decision for your student.

Student Safety & Well-Being

The news media is replete with stories about the tragic deaths of college students as a result of binge drinking and hazing. Although these tragedies are not isolated to fraternities and sororities, these organizations face challenges associated with teaching and modeling mature and responsible conduct for their members.

Most fraternities and sororities take these matters seriously and have developed policies, educational programs, and accountability measures to address alcohol and drug abuse and hazing. For example, you may want to review the *Fraternal Information and Programming Group's* [**FIPG**] policies relating to these issues. Furthermore, as you and your student meet with representatives from various fraternities and sororities, you should ask about what each organization does to prevent and address problem behavior.

The University and the State of Utah have a zero tolerance policy for hazing. Hazing is a criminal offense in the State of Utah [see **UCA 76-5-107.5**] and is expressly prohibited by Southern Utah University in its policy on **STUDENT RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT** [see **SUU Policy # 11.2**].

Southern Utah University is a **dry campus**. Regardless of age, a student may not possess or consume alcohol on campus. However, students who are 21 or older may consume alcohol at events off campus and some Greek students do drink. Moreover, each fraternity or sorority establishes its own rules regarding alcohol within their Chapter Houses. You should inquire about how each Chapter handles drinking within their homes.

If you have any additional questions, concerns, or you need to report an incident of misconduct please contact the Office of Student Involvement at Leadership at 435-586-7762.

Financial Commitment

Joining a fraternity or sorority requires a long-term financial commitment. Each semester students are charged membership dues. On average, the membership dues at SUU are approximately \$300 (USD) per semester. **Comparatively, the cost of participating in a fraternity or sorority at SUU is significantly less than most other campuses across the country.**

Your student should also ask about any additional costs during their first semester of membership. It is not uncommon for the first semester of dues to be higher because students are expected to pay an initiation fee. The initiation fee covers such items as a fraternity pin and new member education materials. Anticipate spending approximately \$450 (USD) for the first semester, all subsequent semesters membership dues should be less expensive.

What exactly do membership dues provide? A portion of the dues are sent to the National Office to administer fraternity-wide programs and pay for the organization's liability insurance premium. The remaining balance stays with the local chapter for a variety of functions which include: member recruitment and education, philanthropic and service projects, and social programming. Fraternities and sororities can provide you with a detailed and itemized budget indicating how funds are spent and distributed. You should ask about how finances are managed.

Many of the fraternities and sororities at SUU offer payment plans because they recognize the added cost of participation. Your student can also learn to manage dues payments by always being one-semester ahead. In other words, students should always use the current semester to raise funds for the next. Parents can support this by providing the initial semester dues, and encouraging their son or daughter to work and save money during fall semester to pay for spring dues. If you can manage to get on this schedule, the cost should become much more manageable.

There are also incidental and extra expenses that may occur in a given semester. For example, some organizations will have t-shirts screen printed or will have a modest charge to go to leadership retreats or similar programs. Be sure to ask about these additional costs.

Time Commitment

In any given week, a student should expect to invest between 5 and 10 hours for fraternity or sorority activities. At some points in the semester, more time may be required. For example, the week leading up to initiation often requires more time and varies from organization to organization.

Each week Chapter's hold various meetings. Most chapters have set aside Monday night to hold at least one meeting that last around 2 hours. All members are expected to attend that meeting. Other meetings may be required if you hold a leadership office or are involved in the member education program.

New members are required to attend educational meetings designed to help them learn about the organization and how to become an exemplary member. Historically, this educational program was called "pledge." However, today most organizations refer to it as "new member education" or "candidate education." The length of new member education varies from organization to organization, but it is typically between 6 and 10 weeks. Each week prospective members attend a meeting and a leadership or social activity.

Most SUU Greek students are able to manage their time well. Many, if not most, Greek students perform well in class, hold down a part-time job, and fulfill other obligations in addition to participating in their Chapter.

Value Added

Students who join fraternities and sororities can take advantage of a variety of enriching experiences that advance their personal development and complement their college education. You should consider the following opportunities:

Leadership Development

Greek organizations are self-sustaining, complex organizations and their management requires students to develop and refine a variety of leadership skills.

Organizational Tasks	Corresponding Leadership Competencies	
Member Recruitment	Strategic Planning, Marketing, Advertising & Effective Interpersonal Communication	
Member Accountability & Discipline	Conflict Resolution, Policy Interpretation, Facilitating Due Process, Critical Thinking	Procedure
Financial Management	Budgeting, Accounting, Transparent Bookkeeping, & Fundraising	Aside from the day-to-day management of an organization, many fraternities and sororities host leadership retreats and attend regional and national leadership
Event Management (Philanthropy, Service & Socials)	Brainstorming, Planning, Risk Management, & Mass Communication	
Chapter Meeting Management conferences where they can learn from leadership experts.	Developing Agendas, Parliamentary	

Academic Support

Some fraternities and sororities have established excellent programs that encourage students to excel academically. Furthermore, nearly all Chapters have minimum academic standards that must be met to join or hold office. Many also have scholarships available or will offer high achieving students a discount on membership dues. These programs serve as positive peer pressure through offering encouragement and incentives.

Philanthropy & Service

Greek students at SUU engage in hundreds of hours of community service and raise thousands of dollars for various charities. Recipients of Greek service and fundraising include:

Women's Cardiac Care
 Breast Cancer Awareness
 American Cancer Society's Relay for Life
 Cedar City Easter Egg Hunt
 Children's Miracle Network Huntsman
 Cancer Institute
 Boy's and Girl's Club
 Sub for Santa
 Festival of Trees
 Children's Christmas Parade

Social Programming

Fraternalities and sororities offer their members an engaging social life. They host formals in the spring semester, co-host social activities, parties and tailgates, compete in intramural athletic competitions, support University athletics, and provide their members with a wide array of friends to just hang out.

Networking

In addition to providing an instant group of friends and colleagues, fraternities and sororities also facilitate opportunities for professional networking. Not only do students come to know other students with similar interests and ambitions at SUU, but alumni members of their organizations. National organizations also expose students to alumni and co-eds from across the country.

Student Housing

Each fraternity and sorority at Southern Utah University rents a home within the community. These rental properties are usually within walking distance of the campus. Parents and students should understand that the University does not have any oversight over Greek housing and is not responsible for the services a fraternity or sorority agrees to provide its members/residents as part of their lease agreements.

Participating In Recruitment

Students interested in joining a fraternity or sorority will need to participate in Greek Recruitment. Fraternities and sororities recruit students during the second week of the fall semester. For the 2015-2016 school year, recruitment week will be announced.

To participate in recruitment students should register with the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership. The registration is available on-line at <http://stilsuu.com/how-to-join>.

Once a student has registered, they will be notified of recruitment events that occur during recruitment week. Registering for recruitment enables chapter representatives to contact interested students and provide them with important information about joining.

If you have any questions about recruitment, please contact the office of Student Involvement and Leadership at 435-865-7762. You can also send emails to gogreek@suu.edu.