New Member Bill of Rights

History: First issued January 2011; Revised July 2015

Related Policy: Fraternities and Sororities: Procedures for Recruitment, Intake, and New Member Activities, RUL 11.56.03

Contact Info: Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life, 919.513.2910

Introduction: For the purpose of this document, “new members” shall be defined as anyone who is participating in the membership process of a fraternity or sorority. Synonyms vary by organization and include terms like pledge, associate member, candidate, aspirant, etc.

Each fraternity and sorority meets with the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) prior to the recruitment/selection of new members to discuss rush events, intake, and new member activities. FSL works with chapters to facilitate a successful and positive experience for all involved in the recruitment and new member process. Each chapter develops a calendar of activities that are in line with our Membership Rules. Approved calendars have a number of activities that are constructive and will contribute to your becoming a more active and productive member of your fraternity or sorority. However, there are other activities in which you might be asked to take part that are not listed on the approved calendar. These activities may be inconsistent with the academic mission of the University, may potentially violate the FSL Membership Rules and/or the NC State Code of Conduct, and may even violate inter/national fraternity and sorority regulations. As a new member, it is your responsibility to always conduct yourself in a manner that maintains your good standing with the University and your new fraternity/sorority.

Listed below is a New Member Bill of Rights that specifically outlines your rights as a new member as well as activities that fraternity or sorority members cannot require of you. If they do so, the fraternity or sorority and the individual member(s) in question are subject to group and individual charges and sanctions which may include permanent removal of NC State recognition as an organization, individual suspension from NC State, and possibly removal of the chapter’s charter. As a new member, your participation in such events, whether willing or coerced, is inappropriate and may be subject to judicial review. Please study your rights and make certain that they are not violated.

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New Member Bill of Rights

Each new member has:

1. The right to a process that respects their human dignity and protects their mental and physical well-being.
2. The right to be treated as an individual.
3. The right to be fully informed about the membership process costs and requirements.
4. The right to ask questions and receive true and objective answers from members.
5. The right to be treated as a capable and mature person without being patronized.
6. The right to make informed choices without undue pressure from others.
7. The right to have a positive, safe and enriching new member period.
8. The right to new member activities that promote scholarship, promote service, develop leadership and/or social skills, assist career goals, involve students with alumni, improve relations with others, build awareness of fraternity or sorority history, instill a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood, foster chapter solidarity or otherwise promote the institutional mission of the host university.

To this end, no new member shall be asked by any person or persons to abandon or tolerate a violation of their rights. Such requests would include any act which:

1. Interferes with the academic process – causes the new member to miss or be ill prepared for classes, labs, study sessions, or tests. While it is acceptable for new members to be asked to participate in chapter study hours, that requirement should not exceed 6 hours per week.
2. Causes the new member to violate inter/national fraternity and sorority regulations and/or NC State policies.
3. Requires or pressures a new member to consume alcohol if of legal age or provides opportunity to consume alcohol as a new member who is underage.
4. Prevents the new member from securing normal amounts of sleep. All activity, unless otherwise approved, should not begin before 9:00 a.m. and should end before 11:00 p.m.
5. Requires the new member to perform personal services for collegiate or alumni members (including, but not limited to, driving around members and/or their guests (including members of other organizations), “shopping” for members, etc.).
6. Requires the new member to participate in assigned designated driver duties (only tolerable if all chapter members participate and a letter from the Inter/National Organization is provided approving the practice).
7. Is malicious – treats the new member in a “sub-human” manner, purposeless, or is intentionally cruel.
8. Is illegal – including the use of drugs and alcohol or committing a crime such as stealing or vandalism.
9. Violates the fraternal values of the fraternity or sorority.
10. Places the new member in physical danger or harm.
11. Asks new members to participate in any form of calisthenics, like running, unless connected to athletic training for a recognized competition (i.e., intramural team, Greek Week, etc.).
13. Requires the new member to be present at activities for unreasonable periods of time.
14. Coerces new members to attend meetings/activities through fines/sanction that are not also levied against initiated members.
15. Requires the new member to participate in questioning activities such as “line-ups.”
16. Prescribes the wearing of anything to identify new member status (exception: badges).
17. Requires the new member to dress in costume when not appropriate to do so, or when that costume is specifically meant to embarrass or harass the new member.
18. Requires the new member to carry items that they would not normally bear (including paddles, bricks, signature books, etc.).
19. Prevents the new member from engaging in normal everyday conversation for a period of time or requires new member to honor a period of silence that inhibits academic progress.
20. Involves the abandonment of new member or active members thereby requiring them to find their own way back to campus or kidnapping of any kind.
21. Requires the blindfolding of the new member (exceptions: during low ropes course with trained facilitator, or as prescribed in writing for Ritual).
22. Requires only the new member to stand when a collegiate or alumna/us member enters a room.
23. Requires the new member to intentionally deface the house/chapter room/suite/apartment, etc.; or requires the new member to clean the house/chapter room/suite/apartment, etc. of others.
24. Requires calling other new member derogatory “names” or actives referring to new members in a negative or derogatory manner.
25. Requires new member to enter the house/suite/building only from a specific door.
26. Requires new member to eat meals together unless the chapter is providing a meal plan for the new members. If so, new members should be offered the same food to eat as initiate members.
27. Requires new members to attend unscheduled, last minute, impromptu meetings called for the purpose of harassing, degrading or intimidating said members.
28. Requires new members to sleep in the house/suite/apartment together for any length of time without written permission from FSL and the Inter/National Office.
29. Requires a new member to address or refer to members in a manner different from how they are address (i.e., Mr./Ms. Smith for initiates, Pledge Jean for new members).
30. Requires new member to participate in scavenger hunts or similar activities by any name that involves taking of items, time deadlines, etc. Some scavenger hunts have been approved as part of the new member calendar review. Those hunts take place during the daylight, without alcohol or timelines, and have specific purpose related to the history of the fraternity (i.e., finding the building where the first meeting of the fraternity was held or visiting the location of the bricks on campus).
31. Requires new members to spend their money, outside of the dues structure, to offset the cost of fraternity functions or to purchase items for the members.
32. Requires the new members to road trip in a car with less seatbelts than passengers, includes driving outside of the normal hours (9am to 11pm) or has a timeline involved for travel.

**THIS LIST IS IN NO WAY EXHAUSTIVE.**

Any questions regarding violations of new members’ rights or other questionable activities, including hazing, should be reported to FSL at 919.513.2910. You may ask to speak with Chris Jefferson, Associate Director, or Shelly Brown Dobek, Director. Sources are kept in confidence. Concerns may also be reported to the National Hazing Hotline at (888) NOT-HAZE.