

University Panhellenic Council at The University of Texas at Austin Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The Panhellenic community at The University of Texas at Austin has a zero-tolerance policy for the hate, discrimination, or mistreatment of any of its members or any individuals

Introduction

The University Panhellenic Council (UPC) at the University of Texas at Austin is a community that offers intellectual, personal, and social growth opportunities to women's college experiences through leadership and personal empowerment. UPC serves as the governing body of 13 National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sororities which actively pursue the values of scholarship, philanthropy, and friendship. Further, our community strives to better our campus culture and society. Since 2015, our Executive Board and leadership have been engaged in conversations about inclusion in our recruitment processes and aim to minimize these barriers to recruiting and retaining a diverse community of women. Through the years, we recognize that our Panhellenic community has not prioritized educating members on topics of privilege, cultural appropriation, cultural competency, and inclusivity. The UPC Executive Board continues to engage in constructive discussions with members from Panhellenic, national advisors, and various campus leaders about these topics and has been building an action plan to initiate change in our community.

History/Recognition of the Problem

When sororities were first founded, the societal stigmas around women in higher education loomed as great barriers to women seeking a voice in this restrictive period. Women had to prove that they could perform academically as well as or better than men, all while maintaining the Victorian standards of womanhood. Women convened in secret to find intellectual and social companionship among one another, maintaining ideals of high academic standards and close friendship.

For these reasons, we admire the persistence of these founding women who fought for women's rights and equality as university students. However, we acknowledge that there were no equitable practices nor internal belonging for women of underrepresented groups, whether it was intentional or unintentional. Throughout history, the influence of America's class structure, racial intolerance, and consequently, the lack of underrepresented students on college campuses resulted in our organizations' exclusive structure. The formation of the Panhellenic sororities at The University of Texas at Austin was undoubtedly influenced by the American racial climate as well. Segregation, deeply rooted oppression, and resistance to change in Texas made it difficult for minoritized women to become members of Panhellenic sororities.

We recognize that implicit biases during recruitment continue to perpetuate exclusivity in our communities today. This exclusion, while it may be inadvertent, is still wrong. On a national and international level, diversity and inclusion in all aspects have been and will continue to be a priority for National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) member organizations. Many NPC chapters and college panhellenic across the country have recognized these issues and established their own diversity and inclusion teams in addition to non-discriminatory policies.

Today, as the University Panhellenic Council, we stand as a more diverse and strong Community with various ethnic, racial, religious, cultural identities, ability statuses, and gender expressions, despite the systematic barriers we encounter. Informed by these facts the initiatives listed below are the tangible ways in which her community commits to creating more equitable organizations on our campus.

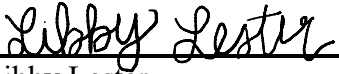
Our commitment to combating these National issues at the University of Texas at Austin

Throughout the 2023 year, we will implement the following initiatives:


- **Develop training and educational programs** for each chapter to delve into the history of Greek life and aforementioned issues. Updated DEI Recruitment, Chapter, and DEI Panhellenic Task Force modules will serve as opportunities to educate our members on cultural appropriations, implicit bias, challenges in our political climate, privilege, and ways in which we can be better allies for all.
- **Promote the D&I Task Force** composed of representatives from Panhellenic chapters who serve as liaisons to the community on educational and programmatic efforts concerning cultural competency, which began in Fall 2018. The Task Force is divided into 3 subcommittees (Internal Recruitment, External Recruitment, and Outreach) to accurately address the diverse needs of the Panhellenic community. Additionally, we require the D&I Task Force to participate in an implicit bias workshop. Further transparency of the Task Force will be adapted on the website, where projects in progress and task force opportunities will be posted.
- **Continue to examine the UPC Formal Recruitment Process** and strive for a biased-conscious environment by including relevant training for recruitment teams and advisors involved in the process.
- **Provide transparent information** about how to join Panhellenic organizations in detail as well as provide further details on the academic, financial, and time requirements of membership. Opportunities to submit recruitment FAQ's will be established on the website.
- **Improve the reach** of information about our Panhellenic Community to every incoming student and clarify expectations of communication between members and potential new members.
- **Elect a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)** as part of our executive board and who will be slated annually. The VP D&I will commit to attending a DEI workshop and publishing an annual DEI transparency report.
- **Celebrate the diversity of Panhellenic** and build a sense of stronger community through affinity groups, scholarship opportunities specifically for members of underrepresented groups, Panhellenic-wide DEI events, and the promotion of authentic voices and experiences from Panhellenic members through social platforms.
- **Promoting and celebrating awareness months** on social media. We are also providing education and training opportunities to all members to increase their understanding of different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences
- **Commit to holding people or individuals accountable** for problematic behaviors or situations. To that end, we have implemented a reporting system where members can share concerns or instances. We take all reports seriously and investigate them thoroughly. We are committed to holding individuals accountable for their actions and making any necessary changes to our policies and procedures to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion practices will transform and shift as time progresses. The Panhellenic Council is committed to revising this living statement

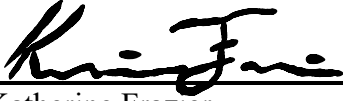
**University Panhellenic
Council**


Libby Lester
President

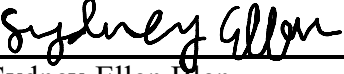
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Kate McGhee
President


Alpha Delta Pi


Katherine Frazier
President

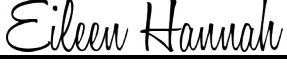
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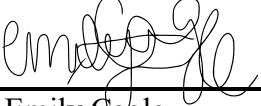
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