



# Resolved to Educate

## Educational support for: The National Panhellenic Conference Unanimous Agreements

“... It seems to me that the title ‘Unanimous Agreement’ is a reflection of the basic trust and respect for each member of the Panhellenic. To me, this trust means that each of us believes that every other member is voting in the best interest of Panhellenic as she sees it, not selfishly. The respect means that we see each member as so important, so important that we must not ask that group to abide by anything not acceptable to it. I feel deeply that the strength, the backbone of the Panhellenic, lies in the concept of the Unanimous Agreements.”

— Mary Ann Carroll, NPC delegate, Chi Omega Fraternity (1972)

### What are the Unanimous Agreements?

The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) is a longstanding collaboration of 26 independent, self-governing sororities. Some principles are so fundamental that they have been ratified by all 26 organizations as binding rules. These are the Unanimous Agreements (UAs).

The UAs outline basic ethics, policies and rules of fair play. They also set forth the rights of sororities as private, voluntary social organizations.

All NPC member organizations and their individual members are required to follow the UAs. All College Panhellenic Associations (Inter-Sorority Councils or other equivalent organizations) and Alumnae Panhellenic Associations must incorporate the UAs into their procedures, operating methods, bylaws and membership recruitment rules. NPC may not breach the rights and powers of its member sororities, but the UAs represent a united voice and are enforceable.

The UAs are the ultimate expression of cooperation and trust among the NPC member organizations. To the fraternal world, the UAs represent respect, unity and authority. Each member organization has a solemn responsibility to perpetuate that trust and respect by educating its collegians and alumnae about the importance of the UAs.

### History of the UAs

During their first decades, the oldest sororities operated without any common ground rules about recruitment and membership. Realizing that cooperation was essential to each organization’s survival and success, they established NPC in 1902 and immediately adopted what they called the Binding Agreements. The decisions they made comprise most of what we know today as the Panhellenic Compact (UA III).

Since then, the member organizations of NPC have added to the UAs. The agreements continue to include the procedures, policies and ethics that are considered crucial to good order and equitable relationships. As a confirmation that all 26 member organizations are truly unified in their decisions, the UAs are signed by every inter/national president. Her signature is her sorority’s bond that every collegiate and alumna member will abide by and honor the UAs.

### What every local Panhellenic needs to know about the UAs

They are binding.

They may be created or amended only by vote of the NPC Council of Delegates and then ratified by every member organization’s inter/national president.

College and Alumnae Panhellenics may not establish rules or policies that contradict the UAs, nor may they enact policies that violate the sovereign rights of a member organization.

If any local Panhellenic document contradicts the UAs, that aspect of the document must be removed immediately; no vote is necessary.

All collegians and alumnae who are members of an NPC member organization are responsible for knowing, following and upholding the UAs.

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### Summary of the UAs and their relevance to College Panhellenic governance and operations

#### I. The Panhellenic Creed

States the beliefs and values by which all NPC women strive to live. It serves as the cornerstone for building Panhellenic communities. In joining an NPC organization, a woman pledges herself to mutual respect and helpfulness, to the encouragement of scholastic pursuits, to high standards, and to “wide and wise human service.”

#### II. Jurisdiction of Panhellenic Associations

Provides that these associations be democratic and organized to facilitate cooperation among the women’s sororities on a campus. Local members are called to respect and obey both the letter and spirit of the UAs and to ensure that all Panhellenic governing documents conform to the UAs. This section provides guidance as to how a Panhellenic Association operates and governs, prohibits infringement on the rights or privileges of the individual NPC sororities and prohibits College Panhellenics from voting to contradict a UA.

#### III. The Panhellenic Compact

Concerns fundamentals of membership and recruitment. Items under the compact include who is eligible for NPC membership, when recruitment may occur and the conditions and details of the membership recruitment acceptance binding agreement (MRABA).

#### IV. Standards of Ethical Conduct

Describes specific behavioral expectations that express the spirit of the Panhellenic Creed. For example, women are to avoid speaking disparagingly about members of other organizations or any collegiate woman, and to refrain from conduct that would reflect negatively on NPC or its members. This UA condemns hazing and denounces the public ranking or categorizing of individual chapters.

#### V. Agreement on Extension

Deals with establishing new chapters. Among other regulations, a member organization may establish a chapter only at a regionally accredited institution that confers bachelor’s degrees, and the proper authority at the school must have granted approval for the sorority community to expand. This agreement also stipulates the types of contact and communication among member organizations, their representatives and the institution that are permissible during the extension process.

#### VI. College Panhellenic Association Agreement

Outlines the basic principles of establishing and operating a College Panhellenic Association. It further explains the rights of individual member organizations within the association and regulates certain recruitment practices, such as prohibiting the presence of men and alcohol.

#### VII. College Panhellenic Association Judicial Procedure

Offers a detailed explanation of the judicial process a College Panhellenic must follow to resolve member organization infractions of the NPC UAs, NPC policies or of any local Panhellenic governing document.

#### VIII. Agreement on Questionnaires

Provides that any research-related questionnaires, oral or written, be answered only after they have been reviewed and approved by the NPC. This provision facilitates a coordinated response and protects individual and organization freedom of association and the right to privacy.

#### IX. NPC Declaration of Freedom

Reiterates the long-held belief that NPC organizations and members contribute to thorough and accurate knowledge of the freedoms and rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

#### X. Protecting the Right of NPC Members to Remain Women-Only Organizations

Clarifies and reinforces the NPC position that member organizations continue to exist as women-only private social organizations — a legal protection afforded by an exception under Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. This UA denounces the participation of Panhellenic women (collegiate and alumnae) in men’s fraternity events when or where the primary purpose is recruitment, as well as membership in auxiliary groups of men’s fraternities, because such activities present a legal threat to the single-sex status of both men’s and women’s organizations.