



College Panhellenic Officer Election Resources

Selecting and training qualified and dedicated officers to serve your College Panhellenic is an important aspect of Panhellenic operations. In addition to your own College Panhellenic Bylaws and NPC Policies and Best Practices, the resources included here should be helpful as you prepare for College Panhellenic officer elections and transition. In this document, you will find a sample timeline for the election and transition process, frequently asked questions, and tips and examples related to officer applications and interviews.

Sample College Panhellenic election timeline

Every College Panhellenic needs to determine its own elections timeline, based on its campus calendar and organizational needs. The following timeline example may help your College Panhellenic develop its own process for officer elections. This timeline assumes that individuals take office at the start of the winter/spring term (or equivalent) in early January. If your College Panhellenic transitions officers at a different time, adjust the timeline accordingly and contact your NPC area advisor if you need assistance.

September

- Review your bylaws. Become familiar with the process you have outlined for the officer selection process and ensure that all involved understand their roles.
 - » If adjustments are needed to your College Panhellenic bylaws, they must be made prior to beginning the election process.
 - » It is recommended that campuses with four or less member organizations to use a rotation system to determine officer selection. For campuses with five to seven member organizations, rotation or election may be used. For campuses with seven or more member organizations, an election system is recommended.
- Review the application questions and make adjustments as needed. If you will also have an interview process, review the interview questions and adjust as needed. Consult with your fraternity/sorority advisor about the process, and ensure any meeting rooms or other necessary resources can be reserved.
- If you hold interviews, be sure these dates are scheduled in advance and communicated to applicants with the application form.
- Determine an appropriate deadline for officer applications, and ensure that it is clearly communicated when the applications are distributed. Plan to allow at least two weeks for individuals to complete the application.
- Following your bylaws, confirm:
 - » The individuals who will be on the Nominating Committee
 - » The timeline for the Nominating Committee to review applications
 - » The timeline to present a slate of officers

October

- Before distributing applications, communicate with all chapters about the role of the College Panhellenic officers; include the position description, expectations and selection process. Consider holding an interest meeting to review this information with potential applicants, or have current College Panhellenic officers visit chapters to “job sell” the positions.



- Distribute College Panhellenic officer applications to chapter Panhellenic delegates to disseminate. Also, post the application on the College Panhellenic website and promote the openings for applicants through social media.
- Following the deadline, review the applications to determine that applicants meet prerequisites outlined in your bylaws (GPA requirement, prior experience requirement, good standing with their chapters, etc.)

Officers and Delegates (1993) – POLICY

All College Panhellenic delegates, officers and committee members shall be in good standing with their member organizations, be active participants in their collegiate chapter and shall be enrolled in the institution where the chapter is located.

- Distribute applications to the Nominating Committee. Allow at least one week for the Nominating Committee to complete its review. Depending on the size of your Panhellenic community or the number of applications, it may be possible to distribute and review electronically. You may find a subsequent in-person review session to be helpful.
- Hold interviews. In addition to learning about the candidates, be sure to explain the time commitments and important dates with all candidates.
- The Nominating Committee should meet to score/evaluate or review applicants and make recommendations. (Do this at least one month before the last College Panhellenic meeting of the term.) Your College Panhellenic bylaws should indicate if the Nominating Committee can present multiple candidates for each position.

Three weeks prior to last meeting of the term

- The Nominating Committee makes their recommendation to the College Panhellenic delegates at a regular College Panhellenic meeting. The delegates have the opportunity to discuss with their chapters, and then vote at the following regular College Panhellenic meeting. Use your bylaws to confirm what vote is needed to pass the recommendation.

Tip: Communicating with Candidates

Keep the candidate pool informed throughout each stage of the selection process. Once the College Panhellenic makes its selections, it must communicate with those who were selected and with those who were not. For those who were chosen to be officers, be sure to outline the next steps, such as training and expectations. For those who were not selected, thank them for their enthusiasm, and encourage them to get involved through other College Panhellenic initiatives or committee opportunities.



Frequently Asked Questions About Officer Elections

Do we have to hold elections, or can we use a rotation system?

It is recommended that campuses with four or less member organizations use a rotation system to determine the selection of officers. For campuses with five to seven member organizations, rotation or election may be used. For campuses with seven or more members, an election system for officers is recommended. Whichever method you chose, be sure that your College Panhellenic bylaws reflect the intended practice, and that all chapters are familiar with your officer selection process.

Officer Selection (2001) – POLICY

The College Panhellenic officer selection process may include rotation, election or an election-rotation combination to provide successful leadership and equitable and fair representation of the NPC member organizations.

What parts of the election process should be outlined in the bylaws? In the standing rules?

- Anything that has to do with the rights of membership needs to be included in the bylaws. For example, eligibility for an officer position or the requirements to serve in officer roles.
- The process by which officers are chosen must be included in the bylaws. For example, whether the process will be by rotation or by election.
 - » If rotation, indicate that the order of rotation would be listed in the standing rules.
 - » If election, bylaws should describe how the candidates will be presented to the voting body; whether nominations from the floor will be accepted; the vote threshold to elect an officer (usually simple majority).
- Additional details about the procedure can be included in standing rules. For example, if a timeline is determined for the elections process (with application dates, deadlines, or officer transition processes) this could be a part of standing rules.
- If specific rules are adopted by a Nominating Committee to determine the members' expectations regarding their participation and/or for the time taken to review nominees, this would be specified in standing rules.

What do we do if a candidate doesn't get a majority vote?

If your bylaws require a majority vote for a candidate to be elected and no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, then the Panhellenic delegates must revote until one candidate receives a majority vote. However, it is possible to adopt a standing rule to address this situation, such as: When no candidate receives a majority of votes cast on the first ballot, a second ballot will be taken between the candidates receiving the two highest numbers of votes. The candidate receiving the most votes on the second ballot is elected.

If such a rule is desired, it should be incorporated into your College Panhellenic standing rules prior to voting on the candidates.



What happens if there is a tie vote between two candidates?

If the vote between two or more candidates results in a tie, then the College Panhellenic delegates must revote until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.

However, it is possible to adopt a standing rule to address this situation, such as: When the number of votes cast for two or more candidates results in a tie, then a second ballot will be taken.

If the results of the second ballot still produce a tie, then the election will be decided by drawing a name from a hat or by the flip of a coin.

If such a rule is desired, it should be incorporated into your College Panhellenic standing rules prior to voting on the candidates.

What do we do if no qualified candidates apply for an office, or no one meets the prerequisites outlined in the bylaws? Can we suspend the bylaws to make exceptions?

Bylaws cannot be suspended and you cannot make exceptions unless the bylaws specifically allow it. It is important when writing bylaws to not make requirements for holding office so stringent that it would be difficult to find candidates.

Can we prohibit nominations from the floor, since those candidates weren't reviewed by the Nominating Committee?

A College Panhellenic may adopt a bylaws provision prohibiting nominations from the floor. However, it may be better to adopt a bylaws provision or a standing rule, such as: Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor provided that they have been deemed eligible to hold office by the Nominating Committee at least 48 hours prior to the nomination from the floor.

What happens if an elected officer does not meet the required GPA at the end of the academic term (for example, if she is elected in November for service beginning in January, but her fall semester grades do not meet the required GPA)?

If the bylaws state that an officer must meet a certain GPA to hold an office or serve as an officer rather than be elected to an office, then the office will be declared vacant when it is determined that a person does not meet the requirement anytime during her term. The vacancy will then be filled as provided in the College Panhellenic bylaws.

How do we determine who serves on the Nominating Committee, that is, who reviews candidates?

Composition of the Nominating Committee must be outlined in the bylaws under the Officers and Duties Article, Nomination Procedure Section. When possible, representation from all chapters is suggested. The Nominating Committee may be elected by the Panhellenic delegates from the general membership, or the bylaws may outline specific individuals who shall serve in this role. For example, the outgoing Executive Committee may provide this function, or the Panhellenic delegates, or a combination of past officers and other members. Your bylaws should indicate the process by which Nominating Committee members are chosen.



Sample Officer Transition Timeline

The success of an officer team often stems directly from the strength of its transition experience. While it is tempting for outgoing officers to quickly fade away right after elections, it is their responsibility to finish strong and pass the baton to the new officers.

Day One

Officers are elected. Ideally, this will be done with at least three weeks left in the term and at least one College Panhellenic meeting left in the term.

Week One

- Outgoing officers and incoming officers should meet as one group as soon as possible to discuss their year. Group transitions are a great time to learn about how the team should function.
- Incoming officers meet as a group on their own to discuss leadership styles. If possible, use your campus' leadership office to conduct some kind of inventory, such as StrengthsQuest to uncover and share each person's skills and identify how they can use them together to benefit the team. Formulate an approach to the upcoming year and discuss any initiatives you might want to pursue.

Week One or Two

- Outgoing and incoming officers should meet individually for a thorough transition. This should take several meetings. Topics include:
 - » Performing shared office hours so the outgoing officer can show the incoming officer day-to-day life in the office.
 - » Review of the calendar. The outgoing officer should communicate what the year looks like. What are the busy times? What are the down times? What are things she should watch for?
 - » Forwarding pertinent emails. Sometimes an officer is repeatedly asked the same few questions. If there is a good response already drafted, the outgoing officer should send that to the new one for reference. Any kind of communication or documentation would be helpful.
 - » Sharing of pertinent documents, including College Panhellenic bylaws, officer rosters and historical documents necessary for the position.
 - » What reports should the new officer know about? Anything that goes to chapters? Anything that goes to NPC?
 - » Outgoing officer should introduce the incoming officer to key people on campus. Incoming officers should understand when to reach out to these key people as resources to assist the College Panhellenic. Who are her campus allies?

Week Two

- Continuation of outgoing/incoming meetings.
- Are there any appointed officers to be named? The outgoing officers should assist in this process, allowing the incoming officers to make final decisions. This ensures everything is completed when the new officers are installed.
- Outgoing officers should assist incoming officers as they set up any training meetings or retreats. What are the best practices? What are the pitfalls?



Week Two or Three

- Assist in the transition of other officers. Once all new presidents are elected, the outgoing and incoming College Panhellenic presidents should have a meeting with all incoming and outgoing chapter presidents. This

should be a forum for the incoming presidents to ask about what's ahead and let the outgoing presidents share from their experience. The same could happen with delegates, recruitment chairmen and any other officers who might benefit from this type of meeting. These meetings should be hosted by the College Panhellenic and discussions should center around how the office works with the Panhellenic community and the campus at large. They should not take the place of effective chapter-related officer transition processes.

Week Three

- College Panhellenic Council meeting. Outgoing and incoming officers sit together at the head table as the outgoing officers lead the incoming officers through a College Panhellenic meeting together. The new officers may be installed at this meeting, at a later meeting, or at a special installation ceremony/banquet.
- After the new officers are installed, they should revisit their first meeting alone as a group. What has changed about how they want to approach things and/or new initiatives they may want to pursue? How have their one-on-one transitions influenced the way they view the upcoming year?

Break between academic terms

After returning to campus in January/February

Week One

- Consider a training for all chapter presidents and council officers. Be certain the College Panhellenic officers participate in this.
- By the end of the first week of school, have a casual meeting with the College Panhellenic Council (Executive Committee, appointed officers and delegates). Help the women get to know one another. Have small-group and big-group goal setting.

Tips:

If your campus hosts recruitment in the spring term, plan these extra steps:

- As soon as new officers are elected, they should begin attending any recruitment-related meetings where their office might be involved. The new officers should attend as observers, but should give input.
- One transition meeting should be held involving all incoming and outgoing officers, just to discuss recruitment.
- Once the new officers are installed, they take over recruitment-related responsibilities and are the leaders throughout primary recruitment.
- Outgoing officers should be available to the new officers when questions arise.
- The outgoing officers should not attend meetings unless they are invited or have a role at the meeting because of a chapter office they hold.



Creating an Application

Creating an application for the College Panhellenic officer election process should be easy once the College Panhellenic has identified the qualities and skills each office requires (refer to the job qualifications in your College Panhellenic bylaws). The application should be separate from the list of interview questions and should include information that will help determine whether each woman applying is a good candidate for the role. Remember, the application is the applicant's first impression.

Here are a few questions to consider during this process:

- What is important to know about each applicant?
- What questions can help the Nominating Committee learn about the applicant's perspective on her sorority experience, the College Panhellenic and her chapter?
- What questions will help determine whether the applicant can commit to this role?
- What questions will help determine whether the applicant has the characteristics, skills and attitude the College Panhellenic is seeking?

At minimum, the application should:

- Tell the applicant the qualities that the College Panhellenic is seeking.
- Ask open-ended questions to identify whether the applicant has the qualities and skills that have been identified.

Tip: "Signing Off"

Consider asking the chapter president or advisor to sign the application as part of the process. By doing so, the president or advisor verifies that the applicant is in good standing with her chapter academically, financially and socially. This is an optional step, and is not intended to be an endorsement of a candidate; instead, it simply verifies that the candidate is in good standing.

Make sure to disseminate applications at least two weeks before they are due. This allows enough time to promote the opportunity, for women to complete the application and to have an appropriate person complete the recommendation form.

What to include in the application packet

Introductory letter with position description and outline of the selection process, including a timeline for selection

- Application that captures contact information and answers to open-ended, values-based questions that provide the opportunity to get to know the candidate and her interest in the position.

Sample Officer Application

1. Introductory letter

Dear College Panhellenic officer applicant,

We are so excited that you are interested in becoming a College Panhellenic officer!

All applicants must be:

- Initiated undergraduate members of one of the campus' recognized sororities.
- In good standing with their chapter and inter/national organization.
- Willing to fulfill all the time requirements for training and service as a College Panhellenic officer, plus additional requirements as outlined in the College Panhellenic bylaws.

Thank you for your interest in a College Panhellenic officer position. We look forward to learning more about you.

Interfraternally,

Name

Title

Contact information

2. Personal information

Name:

Chapter affiliation:

Academic year:

Cumulative GPA:

Email address:

Cell phone number:

In good standing with the campus: (circle one) Yes No

3. Sign Off

This section is to be completed by either your chapter president or chapter advisor.

Name of person completing:

Is this applicant in good standing with your chapter? (circle one) Yes No

- This includes good standing academically, financially, socially, etc.

Signature of person completing:

4. General questions

- List available College Panhellenic position(s) for which you are applying.
- Why do you want to serve as a College Panhellenic officer?
- What leadership positions have you held during your collegiate years? Include positions in your chapter and elsewhere on campus or in the community.
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? How do these qualities relate to this/these position(s)?
- As a College Panhellenic officer, your ability to communicate will be critical to your role. What is your communication style? Please provide an example.



Nominating Committee

The committee should meet prior to applications being submitted to make sure everyone is in agreement regarding the selection process and how to evaluate each candidate’s application and/or interview. Creating a selection matrix is one way to evaluate more objectively.

To create a selection matrix, divide the matrix into sections that flesh out each characteristic and skill outlined in the bylaws and/or identified by the Nominating Committee. This allows the committee to evaluate each candidate consistently and fairly.

Here is a sample selection matrix section for the characteristic of understands personal and panhellenic values:

Characteristic:	1	2	3	4	5
Understands personal and panhellenic values.	Candidate is unable to articulate her personal values or the values of Panhellenic.	Candidate can articulate basic personal values but not the values of Panhellenic.	Candidate can articulate basic personal and panhellenic values.	Candidate can articulate personal and panhellenic values in a comprehensive way.	Candidate can articulate personal and panhellenic values in a comprehensive way and relate those values to the role of a Panhellenic officer.
Comments/notes:					

Remember, the committee should consider a candidate’s application and/or interview when evaluating where on the matrix her characteristics or skill levels falls. In addition, be sure to include space for comments/notes on the matrix.

Scores based on the selection matrix help identify the top candidates. It is important to review both the numbers and comments/notes, because individuals tend to score information differently.

Another important consideration for the Nominating Committee is the skills each candidate might bring as a member of the group, and how the full Executive Committee would work together.

Interviews

During interview scheduling, make sure to communicate the logistics, including when and where each interview will be held and how the candidates will be contacted during the selection process. It’s best to schedule 20 to 30 minutes for each candidate interview.

Next, create a list of questions to ask during the interviews. Each Nominating Committee member should have specific questions for candidates based on their application and the position(s) they seek. Having generic questions is also helpful.

Sample Interview Questions

- What interests you about this position?
- How would you describe the ideal XX officer position?
- What does it mean to be “Panhellenic”?
- What importance do values play in the Panhellenic community?
- What qualities and characteristics do you have that make you a good fit for this position?
- How will you balance being an officer with your academic priorities?
- What role do you usually play in a team or group project situation?

Tip: Scheduling Interviews

If candidates submit hard copies of their applications, they can sign up for an interview at that time. If they submit their applications electronically, they can sign up online via an electronic survey or Google document — whatever is best for the Nominating Committee.

When creating interview questions, it is also important to determine the types of ideal answers a candidate might provide to each question. For example, if a candidate states that she is interested in being an officer so that she can get out of her chapter’s recruitment or because she doesn’t like something in her chapter, then that is an obvious red flag. However, if the candidate describes the ideal officer as someone who has most of the characteristics and skills identified by the College Panhellenic or outlined in the job description, then she may have hit the mark. At the beginning of the interview, be sure the interviewers introduce themselves and explain their roles in your College Panhellenic.