Advising Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations at Colorado State University
An Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life Resource

Updated October 30, 2015

Fraternities and sororities at Colorado State University host over 2,000 students between 42 organizations. Of those organizations, there are currently just under 175 students across 12 organizations that offer a fraternal experience for college students based on historical connections to cultural heritage. These culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFOs) continue to grow at CSU, and so too does the need for resources to support these chapters.

It is our hope within this article that we can provide a brief overview of the fraternal movement for CBFOs, some information about the chapters currently recognized on campus, and citations for additional readings as you, the faculty/staff advisor, continue to advise any one of our chapters in the Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) or National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC).

Brief Overview of the Fraternal Movement for Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations

Fraternities and sororities have been in existence since 1776 when Phi Beta Kappa was founded at the College of William and Mary—serving as a connection with other students who wanted to engage in discourse more freely. The emergence of culturally based fraternal organizations (historically Black/African American, Latin@, Asian-interest, and the like) had its first wave in the late 1800s and early 1900s with groups like Alpha Zeta, Sigma Pi Phi, and Rho Psi. While several of these organizations ceased to exist before the 21st century, others have been thriving and contributing to higher education since 1904.

NPHC, a collaborative organization of the nine historically Black/African American Greek lettered fraternities and sororities on college campuses, has been in existence since 1930. While these are not the only Black/African American Greek lettered fraternities and sororities on college campuses, several of these chapters have been and continue to be a part of CSU. Of these organizations, five are fraternities and four are sororities. The NPHC chapters currently on CSU’s campus are what we refer to as area-wide chapters, meaning they reach out to more than one campus and or community. NPHC at CSU currently recognizes two active chapters (listed on the next page).

The second wave of CBFOs in higher education occurred in the 1970s as more communities across cultures invested in the collegiate experience desired a fraternal experience and faced rejection and discrimination from existing organizations. Groups used more general cultural labels (like Latina or Asian) to unite similar student experiences, and developed bonding practices similar to groups in NPHC. Several organizations emphasized the importance of bonds across cultures, and sparked the ‘multicultural’ organization movement in the late 1980s. At CSU, the council that hosts the CBFOs outside of NPHC is currently MGC—which evolved from the Latino Greek Council, a move made to better reflect the diversity of its membership. MGC currently recognizes nine active members and one associate member. Among these organizations six are sororities and four are fraternities (listed on the next page).
Fast Facts on MGC and NPHC Chapters

To gain a better understanding of our culturally based fraternal organizations on campus, here are some ‘fast facts’ about the chapters on our campus in MGC and NPHC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Founding Date</th>
<th>Charter Date</th>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Nickname(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Phi Gamma Sorority, Inc.</td>
<td>Feb. 1, 1994</td>
<td>June 8, 2008</td>
<td>National, Local, Twitter</td>
<td>APhiG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beta Gamma Nu Fraternity, Inc.</td>
<td>Jan. 15, 1997</td>
<td>May 7, 2011</td>
<td>National, Facebook</td>
<td>BGNs, BGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Inc.</td>
<td>Apr. 6, 1987</td>
<td>Aug. 24, 2013</td>
<td>National, Local, Facebook</td>
<td>KDChi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc.</td>
<td>Mar. 11, 1986</td>
<td>Oct. 27, 1990</td>
<td>Local, Facebook</td>
<td>Lambda, Silver Las</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority, Inc.</td>
<td>Mar. 5, 1994</td>
<td>Apr. 14, 2000</td>
<td>Local, Facebook</td>
<td>PLCs, Golden Chis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity, Inc.</td>
<td>Apr. 4, 1986</td>
<td>Sep. 9, 1990</td>
<td>National, Facebook</td>
<td>Betas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority, Inc.</td>
<td>Apr. 9, 1990</td>
<td>July 24, 1998</td>
<td>National, Facebook</td>
<td>Gammas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Inc.</td>
<td>Nov. 25, 1987</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 2015</td>
<td>National, Facebook</td>
<td>ODPhis, Knights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Multicultural Greek Council Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Founding Date</th>
<th>Charter Date</th>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Nickname(s)</th>
<th>Areas/Campuses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.</td>
<td>Nov. 17, 1911</td>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omegas, Omega Men</td>
<td>UNC &amp; CSU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – National Pan-Hellenic Council Organizations

Some traditions of CBFOs include hand signs, calls, chants, artifacts, performances, and new member presentations (Smalls and Hernandez, 2009). Each chapter have and display some (or all) of these traditions. Year round, chapters will host events that are designed to educate the community about their traditions and cultural awareness, as well as highlight personal and professional development interests.
Advising Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations at Colorado State University
An Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life Resource

Advising Needs of Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations

We in the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life greatly appreciate that you have taken the time to commit to our chapters as an advisor in addition to your role as a faculty/staff member of CSU. Each chapter has its own set of challenges that they are working through on campus, particularly in relationship development among council chapters and recognition by the other chapters in the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and the Panhellenic Association (PHA).

The specific needs of the chapters will be expressed as you begin and continue to work with our students. Some conversations that have been brought to the attention of the office include and are not limited to the following:

- Developing relationships within chapters of MGC
- Being recognized as a chapter of FSL just like IFC and PHA
- Interpersonal conflict (between and within chapters)
- Resource utility for campus and Northern Colorado
- Fatigue with regard to being ‘the voice’ for changes in FSL
- Recruitment of individuals without other chapters finding out

These are more direct conversations than might be typical of any one chapter. We are confident that you as a faculty/staff advisor for the group can be helpful in some (if not all) of these areas, and we want to highlight that we are committed to helping you support these chapters in ways that are best for the chapter.

Some Notes about Our Office

Within our responsibilities, all members of our office work in some capacity or another with our chapters. Xajés Martinez (a program coordinator) currently advises the Multicultural Greek Council, and Lindsay Sell (the office director) currently advises the National Pan-Hellenic Council. Additionally, the 42 chapters within FSL are spread among four of the five office staff where staff members assist the chapters in general conversations as well as the Elevation accreditation program.

As you continue to work with our groups please feel free to contact us at 970-491-0966, or by email:

Lindsay Sell, Director, lindsay.sell@colostate.edu
Xajés Martinez, Program Coordinator, xajes.martinez@colostate.edu
Natalie Padrón, Program Coordinator, natalie.padron@colostate.edu
Kacee Collard Jarnot, Accountability Specialist (OFSL & CRSCS), kacee.collard@colostate.edu
Matthew Dempsey, Graduate Assistant, matthew.dempsey@colostate.edu
Advising Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations at Colorado State University
An Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life Resource

References


Additional Readings


