



College Panhellenic Officer Elections Guide

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.

Note: College Panhellenics with five to seven chapters may use either a rotation, election, or combined system, while College Panhellenics with seven or more member organizations are encouraged to use an election system.

Election Process Timeline

Every College Panhellenic needs to determine its own election timeline, based on its campus calendar and organizational needs. The following timeline allows a College Panhellenic to plug in specific calendar dates and develop its own process for officer elections.

Pre-Planning Phase (well in advance of elections)

Review your bylaws to become familiar with the officer selection process and ensure all involved understand their roles.

- If adjustments are needed to your College Panhellenic bylaws, they must be made prior to beginning the election process.
- Review and update application and interview questions as needed. Consult with your fraternity/sorority advisor to confirm the process and secure any necessary spaces or resources.
- If interviews will be conducted, schedule these dates in advance and prepare to communicate them clearly to applicants.
- Determine an application deadline and ensure it is clearly communicated when applications are distributed. Plan to allow at least two weeks for interested applicants to complete applications once they are live.
- Following your bylaws, confirm:
 - The individuals who will serve on the Nominating Committee
 - The timeline for the Nominating Committee to review applications
 - The timeline for presenting a slate of officers

Application & Recruitment Phase

- Prior to distributing applications, communicate with all chapters about the roles, expectations and selection process for College Panhellenic officers. Consider hosting an interest meeting or having current officers visit chapters to share information and encourage applicants.



- Distribute officer applications through chapter Panhellenic delegates, post them on the College Panhellenic website and promote openings through additional communication channels such as social media.
- After the application deadline, review submissions to ensure applicants meet prerequisites outlined in your bylaws (e.g., chapter standing, experience).

Review & Interview Phase

- Distribute applications to the Nominating Committee and allow adequate time (at least one week) for review. Depending on the number of applicants, reviews may be conducted electronically and/or in person.
- Conduct interviews using a standard rubric and questions, if applicable.
- Clearly communicate time commitments and key responsibilities of each role to the candidate, either during the interview process or in conversation ahead of a recommended slate being presented to the College Panhellenic delegates.
- The Nominating Committee should meet to evaluate applicants and develop recommendations. The committee should use a standard rubric to evaluate potential board members for best fit. This should occur well in advance of the final College Panhellenic meeting of the term, in alignment with your bylaws.

Selection & Voting Phase (three weeks prior to the last meeting of the term)

- The Nominating Committee presents its recommended slate to the College Panhellenic delegates at a regular meeting.
- Delegates should have time to discuss the slate with their chapters before voting at the subsequent meeting.
- Follow your bylaws to confirm the voting requirements needed to approve the slate.

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 and were not selected.

Election Best Practice and Scenarios

Best Practice: Follow the election process in the bylaws

- 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 an election, bylaws should describe how the candidates will be presented to the voting body, whether nominations from the floor will be accepted, and the vote threshold to elect an officer (usually simple majority).
- Additional details about the procedure can be included in the 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 needs to be specified in the standing rules.

Scenario: A candidate does not get a majority vote

- If your bylaws require a majority vote for a candidate to be elected and if 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.

Scenario: Tie votes

- 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.



Scenario: There are no qualified candidates for a role

- The College Panhellenic bylaws cannot be suspended, and you cannot make exceptions unless the bylaws specifically allow it. It is important when writing bylaws not to make requirements for holding office so stringent that it would be difficult to find candidates.
- If no officers are found to fill the roles, consider filling the roles you are able to fill, then examining the bylaws for opportunities to re-evaluate roles.

Scenario: There are nominations from the floor

- First - what do your College Panhellenic bylaws currently say?
- 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.

Nominating Committee

A nominating committee is established to review applications, evaluate candidates' qualifications and readiness, and recommend a thoughtful and balanced slate of individuals for election to leadership roles.

How to select a nominating committee

- 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. Your bylaws should indicate the process by which Nominating Committee members are chosen.
 - For example, the outgoing Executive Committee may provide this function, the Panhellenic delegates, or a combination of past officers and other members.

Work of the 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 rubric is one way to evaluate more objectively.



- To create a selection rubric, divide the rubric 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. The application questions can also help build out this rubric.

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

Characteristic	1 - Poor	2 - Fair	3 - Good	4 - Great	5 - Excellent
The candidate understands personal and Panhellenic values.	The candidate is unable to articulate their personal values or the values of Panhellenic.	The candidate can articulate basic personal values, but not the values of Panhellenic.	The candidate can articulate basic personal and Panhellenic values.	The candidate can articulate personal and Panhellenic values in a comprehensive way.	The 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 rubric her characteristics or skill levels fall. In addition, be sure to include space for comments/notes on the rubric.
- Scores based on the selection rubric 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.

Applications

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 the candidate; instead, it simply verifies that the candidate is in good standing.

Make sure to open and distribute 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 any 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
- An 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.

The [NPC Sample College Panhellenic Officer Application](#) can be found here.

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?

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, 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.

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.

Decision Notification

Regardless of the final decision, each candidate should be sent a decision notification. This can be in hard copy or via email, but it should be clear and professional, so the candidate understands the final decision. The notification can be short and simple, but should include some key points of information.

- Clear subject line so the recipient knows what the email is about (e.g., “Update on Your Application” or “Offer for [Role Title]”).
- Thank them for their time, interest and effort in the interview process.



- The final decision; it is best to be clear and direct. State clearly whether they were selected or not, to avoid burying the message.
- Reference the position they applied for to avoid confusion, especially if they applied for several roles.
- If it's an offer:
 - Job title and brief summary of the role
 - Official transition date or next steps to confirm
 - Deadline to respond
 - Compensation, if the College Panhellenic offers any
- If it's a rejection:
 - Keep the tone respectful and concise
 - Optionally include brief, general feedback, if appropriate and aimed at helping them improve
 - Encourage them to apply for future roles if it's genuine
- Let them know what the next steps are (e.g., onboarding steps). Provide a person or email they can reach out to with questions.