

# The Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega Diversity Equity and Inclusion

## Commitments

**Mission Statement:** At the Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega, we acknowledge that our organization was founded and rooted upon racial and socioeconomic exclusivity. We have not done enough to acknowledge our past and reflect on the ways in which our current practices still contribute to these institutional systems of oppression. We appreciate all those who have called attention to the way our chapter and the Panhellenic and IFC communities are complicit in these systems, as it reminds us that there is still more work to be done as DEI is an ongoing process. The Epsilon chapter of Alpha Chi Omega is committed to long term change in our community as we work to address the ways our community has harmed marginalized groups in the past and today. We know that words without actions are meaningless - this working document is a comprehensive action plan the members of Alpha Chi Omega Epsilon intend to enact this semester and into the future. We intend for these actions to generate a more inclusive environment for those both within and outside of the Panhellenic and IFC community. These reforms are a product of engaging and creating a dialogue with our chapter, Panhellenic community, National organization, and the larger USC community for how we will work to be better. We started with several guiding questions:

1. How can we make more members from every marginalized group (socioeconomic background, BIPOC community, LGBTQ+ community, and more) feel more welcome in our home?
2. How can we make reforms to the recruitment process to be more inclusive?
3. How can we continuously educate our members?
4. How can we use or monetary privilege, time, and actions to promote change amongst off campus communities and beyond?
5. How can we revitalize our social media to be more inclusive?
6. How can we ensure that Alpha Chi Omega Epsilon will ensure that these changes will be made permanent and are not temporary?
7. How will we hear everyone's' voice and make sure everyone feels heard and represented?
8. How will we spread awareness and promote known resources?

**I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** We understand that DEI is a work in progress, therefore by implementing such practices, we hope to integrate this subject as a core value at Alpha Chi Omega, beginning by integrating DEI points as a membership requirement in the 2022-2023 bylaws.

- a. Educate members through events such as DEI workshops, DEI Tabletalks, DEI Film Nights, DEI themed Monday Night Dinner, focused on past/current social injustice issues to facilitate hard conversations between members.
- b. Formally require 2 DEI points to fulfill Alpha Chi Omega membership requirement every semester (acquired through DEI events on/off campus, through Alpha Chi Omega, service events, and more)
- c. Promote awareness through monthly infographics/newsletter displaying books, podcasts, short films, movies, and other resources members can use.
- d. Creating DEI Service events – members have opportunity to be involved with philanthropy, community service, and DEI at the same time.

- e. Eliminate exclusively heteronormative events and establish sorority-sorority relationships.
  - f. Collaborate with other campus organizations, not just Greek organizations.
  - g. Work to celebrate sisters' holidays/cultures/backgrounds/etc. through cultural celebrations and more.
- II. Finance:** We understand that the large financial commitment is a barrier to entry for many Panhellenic sororities, in both recruitment related registration fees and chapter dues.
- a. **Scholarships:**
    - i. VP Intellectual Development will research and publicize to the chapter all scholarship opportunities they are aware of that can help offset or cover the costs of chapter dues
      - 1. This is including, but not limited to, the Centennial scholarship and Panhellenic new member scholarship, and additional scholarships offered through the Los Angeles Alumnae Panhellenic Association, Alpha Chi Omega nationals, and the Intersorority Parents' Council
      - 2. Deadline: Ongoing commitment
    - ii. Alumnae Chair and VP Ritual and Fraternity Appreciation will reach out to alumnae members of the Epsilon chapter to gauge interest for establishing more scholarships to benefit our members
  - b. **Reduction in Dues and Fees:**
    - i. We commit to creating a chapter budget for the 2022-2023 academic year that reflects the minimum costs necessary to promote a meaningful chapter experience while reducing the socioeconomic barrier joining a chapter poses. This includes, but is not limited to:
      - 1. Evaluating whether it is beneficial to reduce overall dues and add in additional costs for members who want to participate in activities
      - 2. Reducing excessive officer budgets
      - 3. Budget transparency. Members can look at the budget and know how their dues are being spent.
- III. Bylaws and Standards:** To ensure these changes we are making are long-lasting and clearly defined, we will be embarking on an additional bylaws revision process in the Fall 2023 semester with the goal of making our governing documents inclusive to all.
- a. **Language:**
    - i. Update any existing language in our bylaws that is discriminatory or non-inclusive. Adopt and promote non-discrimination and non-harassment clauses. All non-discrimination and diversity statements need to be widely prominently disseminated and proximately displayed, along with instructions on how to deal circumstances where members appear to have engaged in acts of discrimination, harassment, or intolerance.
    - ii. We want to make a more inclusive environment for every member of our organization regardless of sexual orientation. Below are initiatives we intend to implement, taken from the Lambda 10 Project: *Experiences of LGTB*

*People in Fraternities & Sororities* ([https://www.campuspride.org/wp-content/uploads/transgreek\\_2007L10researchreport.pdf](https://www.campuspride.org/wp-content/uploads/transgreek_2007L10researchreport.pdf))

- b. **Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Clauses:**
  - i. Expanding on Article XIV Sections 4 and 5
- c. **Zero Tolerance Policy:**
  - i. Alpha Chi Omega Epsilon will implement a zero-tolerance policy for acts of racism or discrimination
- d. **Addition of a Social Responsibility Chair:**
  - i. This position will sit on the D&I committee
  - ii. Duties include:
    - 1. The @uscaxo Instagram advocates for relevant social issues always, not just when they may be trending by taking suggestions for posts from sisters and working with the Graphics Chair to make them
    - 2. Posts are well written and do not contain language that can be misconstrued or is tone deaf to the issue being discussed by proof-reading and editing chapter statements on the Instagram
    - 3. Ensures that skin lightening filters are not used
    - 4. The Instagram does not tokenize, while making an effort to accurately portray and represent the diverse membership of our chapter
    - 5. Anything else that has to do with ensuring our social media presence is socially responsible
- e. **Adding the Diversity and Inclusion Committee:**
  - i. Organizes chapter-wide fundraising efforts
  - ii. Helps create programming for our chapter/adapting programming to be more inclusive
  - iii. Assists in creating content for our social media about pertinent social issues
  - iv. Facilitates panels for members to discuss their experiences in our chapter and in Greek life generally
- f. **Reporting**
  - i. Making the executive board/CRSB/Chapter president feel more welcoming for women to share their experiences when racism occurs so changes can be made accordingly

**IV. Member Education:** Educating our members with an honest history about the exclusivity of our chapter, both at USC and nationally, is paramount to understanding our privilege as members in these organizations and can help guide us moving forward.

- a. **New Member Education:**
  - i. History of exclusionary practices within our organization and other NPC sororities/IFC fraternities
  - ii. History of NPHC, MGC, AGC councils and how they were created because of exclusionary practices
- b. **Lifetime Member Education:** continuing conversations about how to make our organization more inclusive, social issues, how these things play into the sorority experience

- i. Monthly MyJourney meetings will involve conversations about diversity and the sorority experience
  - 1. Attendance required
- ii. Chapter training on microaggressions and bias (detailed in section IV)
  - 1. Attendance required
- iii. DEI committee will plan additional events to educate members & foster discussion
  - 1. Speakers, panels, etc.
  - 2. At minimum 3 events per semester as outlined in the Panhellenic DEI plan
- iv. Weekly diversity & inclusion challenges to promote learning in the chapter
  - 1. Ex. participating in a book club, reading articles/podcasts, etc.
- v. Mandatory executive board participation in all PHC organized DEI learning opportunities as well as participation in the diversity and inclusion committee
- vi. VP Intellectual Development will continue to promote and add educational resources about diversity & inclusion to our master list

**V. Recruitment:**

- a. **Chapter wide training during Fall/Spring Polish Week:** Implementing microaggression training, unconscious bias training workshops, and workshops on how to discuss race with a PNM during recruitment as well as what racially insensitive remarks to never say to any PNM, member, Greek life member, student, or any BIPOC person we may encounter.
- b. **Create Look book Outfits That are More Cost Effective:** Each house dresses to themed days of rush week. The look books previously created may force members to either buy 1) designer 2) new items of clothing. This excludes members of lower socioeconomic backgrounds that they may not feel welcomed because of these look books. Here are the actions we intend to implement to drastically change these look books:
  - i. Borrowing items from sisters
  - ii. Creating an outfit closet monitored by the clothing managers (similar to the presents closet) where chapter members can temporarily or permanently donate clothes for other sisters to wear during recruitment and return after.
  - iii. Further emphasizing that items bought for recruitment do not have to be name brand or expensive to be completely appropriate for recruitment.
  - iv. Making sure that items bought for formal recruitment can be worn across multiple rounds and/or from one formal recruitment to another.
  - v. Clothing chairs and the VPR being more accessible for outfit related questions and concerns
- c. **BIPOC and Hairstyles:** BIPOC members can wear their hair in the way that makes them feel the most confident instead of feeling as though they need to style their hair in a eurocentric manner during recruitment.

- d. **Bringing Change to Panhellenic:** VPR and VPRI will suggest a rule stating that certain luxury branded items (e.g. gucci belts) be off limits for recruitment to Panhellenic. Some schools already have this rule in place, but USC is most definitely a school where a rule regarding luxury branded clothing items would have an impact on pnm retention and inclusion.
- e. **Membership Selection:** Members will ONLY vote on PNMs they directly spoke to or knew prior to recruitment during ALL rounds of recruitment. PNM pictures will be removed from all general chapter voting proceedings to eliminate bias.
  - i. Something Berkley included in their training is to not recruit members “like us”. When we use this kind of language it incites that we must recruit members exactly like us and may lead to unconscious bias towards members of certain groups. Emphasizing the importance, during recruitment, of girls who exhibit wisdom, devotion, and achievement (values of AXO).
  - ii. Membership selection will be based on the fulfillment of Alpha Chi Omega’s membership standards of Academic Interest, Character, Leadership Ability, Financial Responsibility, and Personal Development
  - iii. A PNM with a legacy status or letter of recommendation will be given no preference in the selection process.
    - 1. VP Recruitment and VP Recruitment Information will work through this change with the national organization conversations that are already taking place.

## VI. **Community Outreach and Engagement:**

- a. **Host Events with Multicultural Greek Organizations & Other Cultural Organizations on Campus:** We recognize the long-standing exclusion that has made our community hostile towards the other councils. We commit to building long lasting working relationships with the other councils and individual chapters so that we can support each other and build a true Greek community.
  - i. Supporting and publicizing other councils’ events on our chapter social media
  - ii. Offering the same incentive to go to these events as we do for other Panhellenic events, if not more for our general chapter
  - iii. Open a conversation with the other councils about holding discussion events to discuss issues within the USC community, as well as smaller events in which all our communities can bond and form long lasting relationships
- b. **Fundraising for Orgs that support BIPOC & Other Marginalized Groups**
  - i. Monthly rotating fundraising bingo for orgs like Loveland, Marsha P. Johnson Institute, Navajo/Hopi COVID-19 relief, etc.
  - ii. Incorporate diversity & inclusion into our philanthropy workshops and education, especially how black women & other WOC have higher rates of domestic violence and sexual assault
    - 1. LA Community: All organizations below have sites within LA county and coincide with our national philanthropy of Domestic Violence Awareness
      - a. Peace Over Violence (<https://www.peaceoverviolence.org/>)

- b. Prototypes (<https://www.prototypes.org/about/mission-history/>)
  - c. The People's Concern (<https://www.thepeopleconcern.org/>)
  - d. Baby2Baby (<https://baby2baby.org/>)
  - e. Good Karma LA (<https://www.thegoodkarmala.org/>)
  - f. LA Center for Law and Justice (<https://www.laclj.org/volunteer-form/>)
- iii. Continuing to support Good Shepherd Shelter as an org that serves many BIPOC victims of domestic violence in the larger LA community

**VII. Social Media:**

- a. Real depiction of our sisterhood, used intentionally
  - i. Increase the representation on our Instagram so that it reflects the actual composition of our chapter, not engaging in tokenizing
  - ii. Every post has a purpose and upholds the values of our chapter
- b. Use our platform to advocate for social justice and human rights issues.
  - i. Will not be used to advance any political issues. The basic rights of human beings are not political issues.
  - ii. Spearheaded by Social Responsibility Chair
- c. Avoid filters that lighten or distort the skin tones of BIPOC in our chapter

**VIII. Membership Programming:**

- a. In addition to maintaining inclusive sisterhood activities every week, membership programming will work with member education to engage members in discussions about DEI and foster an inclusive, intersectional, and supportive sisterhood.
- b. Educate Members on the Exclusionary Roots of Greek Organizations and History of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Asian Greek Council, and Multicultural Greek Council.
- c. Mandate educational events like microaggression prevention training and anti-bias training for the entire chapter.
- d. Mandate participation for all Executive Board members to attend Panhellenic sponsored DEI learning events.
- e. Promote culturally based membership programming events such as Alpha Chi Kitchen or cultural food of the month)

**IX. Ritual and Tradition:**

- a. Work with national org to remove religious aspects from ritual
- b. Educate members on heteronormative culture in the PHC and IFC communities
- c. Periodically review local and national traditions, such as songs and events, to be sure that language and actions are inclusive of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

- X. Staff, Employees, Volunteers, and Facilities:**
- a. Working with PSP to require yearly discrimination and microaggression training for all staff members working in the chapter facility
  - b. Conduct training sessions on LGBT issues for staff and volunteer alumni. As previously noted, older alumni may not be comfortable addressing LGBT issues. Training programs should involve all levels of staff and volunteers.
  - c. Develop guidelines for volunteer alumni and chapter leaders on how to best support LGBT members in the coming out process and, or who are closeted or questioning.
  - d. Implement specific holidays/events around/in the Alpha Chi Omega house
- XI. Creating Long Term Change:** We understand that for these changes to be meaningful they must be long lasting and implemented by every other executive board that comes after us. This document is not the result, but rather the starting point for long term change in our community.
- a. Consistently update this plan with our progress as we accomplish each item
  - b. Conduct semesterly reviews of this plan to add new items and address current issues
  - c. Ensure our successors on the executive board are educated in regards to this plan and will prioritize DEI in their term as a part of their programming
  - d. Promote accountability within the executive board through different programs such as the 21 Day Racial Equity Challenge.

*\*Please click the link below to learn more about some of the monthly DEI initiatives taken from the Alpha Chi Omega Epsilon Chapter. This will be updated monthly. (2022-2023):*

[Alpha Chi Omega DEI Initiatives Tracker](#)