



## The History and Purpose of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated

### “What is the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated?”

The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated (NPHC) is currently composed of nine (9) International Greek letter Sororities and Fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Phi Psi Fraternity, Inc. NPHC promotes interaction through forums, meetings and other mediums for the exchange of information and engages in cooperative programming and initiatives through various activities and functions.

On **May 10, 1930**, on the campus of Howard University, in Washington DC, the National Pan-Hellenic Council was formed as a permanent organization with the following charter members: Omega Psi Phi and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternities, and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta and Zeta Phi Beta Sororities. In 1931, Alpha Phi Alpha and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternities joined the Council. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority joined in 1937 and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity completed the list of member organizations in 1997.

The stated purpose and mission of the organization in 1930 was “Unanimity of thought and action as far as possible in the conduct of Greek letter collegiate fraternities and sororities, and to consider problems of mutual interest to its member organizations.” Early in 1937, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois and became known as “The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated.”

### “Why the Tradition Must Continue On College Campuses”

To understand the need for and concept of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., one must first consider, understand and familiarize oneself with the historical accounts and significance of predominantly Black Greek-letter organizations. While having their own distinct heritages, the nine (9) member organizations of NPHC offer insight and a unique perspective into this understanding and the development of Black socioeconomic and cultural life.

Each of the nine (9) NPHC organizations evolved during a period when African Americans were being denied essential rights and privileges afforded others. Racial isolation on predominantly white campuses and social barriers of class on all campuses created a need for African Americans to align themselves with other individuals sharing common goals and ideals. With the realization of such a need, the African American (Black) Greek-lettered organization movement took on the personae of a haven and outlet, which could foster brotherhood and sisterhood in the pursuit to bring about social change through the development of social programs that would create positive change for Blacks and the country. Today the need remains the same.

While NPHC affiliate organizations recognize the social aspect of Greek college life, the primary purpose and focus of member organizations remains community awareness and action through educational, economic, and cultural service activities. NPHC affiliates and their respective members have pledged to devote their resources to service in their respective communities, realizing that the membership experience of NPHC organizations goes

beyond organizational membership during an individual's college career. A lifetime commitment to the goals and ideals of each respective organization is stressed. The individual member is also expected to align himself with a graduate/alumni chapter, following graduation from college, with the expectation that he/she will attend regular chapter meetings, regional conferences and national conventions, and take an active part in matters concerning and affecting the community in which he or she lives.

The need to form campus-based councils to represent NPHC affiliate organizations is not motivated by a "separatist" philosophy. The establishment of councils assists in maintaining a distinct identity as "service based organizations," as opposed to organizations that may be strictly social in nature; NPHC, Inc. **does not** advocate a disassociation from NIC, NPC, or NALFO organizations on college campuses. The council's purpose is to promote unity and expose members to the "service for life" philosophy and foster leadership development and scholarship. Furthermore, the National Pan-Hellenic Council provides a forum for participation and interaction among the members of affiliate organizations and the organizations themselves. It provides for a stronger unified voice and a stronger unified body. The continued advocacy for the establishment of local councils not only stems from tradition, but also from the realization that many colleges and universities maintain organization registration policies requiring an organization to belong to a national organization and that national organization to a national umbrella organization, in order to function on that respective campus.

It is the endeavor of NPHC, Inc. to foster a more stable environment on campuses for local NPHC councils, provide a forum for dialogue, and provide training for and management of it's respective councils. Having such an entity in place to serve as an umbrella organization centralizes and

provides a clearinghouse for information sanctioned by the NPHC Council of Presidents, whether on the university/college campus and/or in civic, social, and political arenas. It is essential to have such a voice to advocate concerns of local councils and assert the position of the national body, particularly in decisions or rulings that may have a negative impact.