

## 15 Questions to Ask Your Student

### **A Resource for Parents & Families Whose Students Are Interested in Joining a Fraternity or Sorority**

Office of Student Programs & Engagement, Bentley University

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*This resource is intended to serve as an educational guide on what questions parents and family members may want to consider asking their student related to their interest in joining a fraternity or sorority at Bentley. Even if your student has not expressed to you that they plan to join a fraternity or sorority, it is worth asking them about – not because you need to encourage them to join, but because having the conversation can be beneficial. We encourage parents and family members to review the other resources located on the Bentley Greek Life website and to contact Nicole Chabot-Wieferich, Associate Dean of Student Engagement/Director of Student Programs & Engagement, at [nchabotwieferich@bentley.edu](mailto:nchabotwieferich@bentley.edu) or 781-891-2700, if you have additional questions or concerns.*

While there is a lot you can do as a parent or family member to educate yourself on Greek Life in general and at Bentley specifically, one of the most important opportunities you may have is to help your student make the decision that is right for them. Even though our fraternity and sorority chapters are trying to get to know a number of students during the recruitment process, it is also important that students going through the process get to know each chapter, to ensure there is a good fit and values alignment with the organization(s) they are thinking about joining.

If you are having a conversation with your student about Greek Life at Bentley, here are some questions we suggest you ask your student before they participate, or during their participation in, recruitment.

1. **Are you qualified to join a chapter?** In general, any student interested in going through the recruitment process must:
  - a. be enrolled full-time with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.7 with at least 15 credits at Bentley or be a transfer student (or have received an exemption from our office)
  - b. complete our Anti-Hazing Agreement & Grade Release online
  - c. complete the online *Hazing Prevention 101: It's Everyone's Responsibility* training
  - d. attend a Recruitment Information Session

The University puts these requirements in place to prevent academic and health and safety concerns associated with joining a chapter. Students who participate in recruitment despite not meeting these requirements put themselves and others at risks. Chapters know they are only permitted to recruit qualified students.

2. **Is the chapter you are interested in recognized by Bentley?** Unrecognized chapters are associated with a number of risks (see the FAQs resource on the Bentley website. You should also ask your student if the organization has a national or international headquarters. Two fraternities at Bentley are locals (Alpha Gamma Pi and Sigma Gamma Delta), meaning they do not report to a larger national or international organization. The presence of a connection to a national or international organization often means there is added support and oversight of the organization, including personnel, education, and compliance with additional policies. However, the involvement and support offered by a headquarters organization can vary from chapter to chapter, and these added resources often come with an increase in dues, compared to the two local chapters. We encourage you to contact a chapter's HQ if you have questions about what support they provide to their members on Bentley's campus.
3. **How is the chapter supported by adults?** Are there paid consultants responsible for visiting the chapter throughout the year? Is there a designated chapter advisor that attends all meetings and events or is there an alumni member who is an advisor "on paper" but doesn't seem really engaged in what happens in the chapter? How many advisors? Are they volunteers? How regular and deep are these connection points? It is also important to understand the chapter's relationship with its HQ – is it seen by current members as transactional (i.e. paying dues to HQ) or is it seen as meaningful (deep connections with HQ staff and access to professionals at HQ when needed).
4. **How does the chapter support academic success for its new members?** We encourage you to compare this information with the chapter's specific academic data, which can be found in the Community Data section of the Bentley Greek Life website. We track GPA performance for all members of Greek Life, including new members.

How does the average GPA of the chapter (and its new members) compare to other chapters? While we believe GPA isn't the only indicator of academic success, it is important to note that really low GPAs can risk a student's future at the University, and maintaining a healthy GPA is often the path to maintaining different scholarships and securing internships and jobs. "Study hours" should not be the only way a chapter supports academic success.

5. **What does the chapter's behavior around alcohol look like?** It is important to not just ask about alcohol policy (alcohol is prohibited during the new member process by Bentley and by all national/international organizations). It is more important to ask about the chapter culture around alcohol. How often do brothers drink? How much are folks drinking? What are they drinking? Who are they with?
6. **Does the chapter's values seem to align with your own values?** While your student may not know a lot about the chapter yet, this is really important for them to be thinking about. And it's critical they are not just paying attention to what the chapter says it is about, it is also extremely valuable to pay attention to the extent to which the chapter's (and their members') actions actually demonstrate those values.
7. **What is the chapter's relationship with Bentley?** Does the chapter have a conduct history? You can reach also out to Student Programs & Engagement for historical context on any chapter's standing with the University.
8. **What does the new member education process/pledging process entail?** Time commitment? We encourage you to look at new member GPA trends for the chapter, which can be found in the Academic Report on the Bentley website. We encourage you to be mindful of responses from your student that make it sound like the new member education/pledging process is a secret. Students oftentimes believe the entire process is "secret." This is not true. Only a small number of ceremonies and rituals are in fact secret; your student should be able to disclose the vast majority of their intended or current joining/new member experience to you, and if they are not sharing what to expect or how it is going, that is likely cause for concern.
9. **How does the chapter actively engage in issues like hazing prevention, sexual violence prevention, and issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion?** The answer to this question will likely say a lot about the culture of the organization. You can also review the national/international organization's website for relevant information on these topics, as it may indicate the culture of the chapter at Bentley.
10. **Does the chapter include and recruit members from diverse backgrounds?** Even if your student does not identify with historically excluded or marginalized identities, the extent to which the chapter offers an inclusive community has an impact on others' abilities to be themselves, rather than feel a pressure to conform or "fit in."
11. **What else do members of the chapter do at Bentley? What do they go on to do after Bentley?** It is important that potential new members understand the ways in which active members are not involved outside of the chapter, and what kind of personal and career opportunities membership might lead to.
12. **What are the dues/financial expectations for this chapter? Is there a difference for new members? Where does the money go?** These are really important questions. Oftentimes, there are one-time fees in the first semester associated with being a new member.
13. **How do members take care of each other? How do they hold each other accountable?** Does the chapter seem to be one that identifies concerns and resolves them, or ignores them? When considering joining a peer-led student organization, this kind of support and accountability is really important.
14. **In what contexts have you gotten to know members of the chapter? Who else seems to be interested in joining this chapter?** Chapters who meet their members through intramurals, other student organizations, and class might offer different experiences than chapters who meet their members through mutual friends or chapters that meet their members primarily through gatherings at one or more members' off-campus house.
15. **What other chapters are you considering joining?** Students should be intentional about connecting with multiple chapters and keeping their options open. The first connection a student makes might not be the best one for them.