This is the time of year when many fraternities and sororities plan theme parties. Whether Halloween parties, or mixers, the themes that are chosen say a great deal about the sponsoring organizations. Choose poorly, and your chapter’s bad judgment could show up on YouTube or Facebook.

These organizations faced a loss of recognition as a result of these parties.

By avoiding racially and culturally sensitive words and themes, fraternity and sorority members can prove respect for and acceptance of the communities in which they live.

Adapted with permission from the Party Themes Resource Guide developed by the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors
Before your party, ask yourself:

- **DOES THIS EVENT RELY ON STEREOTYPES OF CERTAIN GROUPS OR ENCOURAGE OFFENSIVE DRESS?**
- **IF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN ARE INVITED, OR EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT, DOES THE EVENT/TITLE STEREOTYPE ONE OF THOSE GENDERS?**
- **NOT SURE IF A THEME IS SEXIST? TRY INTERCHANGING THE WORD/THEME WITH A RACIAL WORD/THEME.**
- **IS YOUR THEME CENTERED ON “MAKING FUN” OF A PARTICULAR PEOPLE/CULTURE/CAMPUS GROUP? EVEN IF IT IS NOT, WILL PEOPLE “GO THERE?”**
- **WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO SEND PHOTOS OF YOUR EVENT TO YOUR PARENTS, YOUR INTER/NATIONAL OFFICE, THE CAMPUS NEWSPAPER, OR YOUR COLLEGE PRESIDENT?**

Themes to avoid:
- Blackface
- Men dressing like women
- Using the word “Ho” in the title of your event
- Themes with a binge drinking connotation
- Wearing letters that are not your own
- Culturally insensitive themes

ALL FUN, NO FOUL: CREATIVE YET IN-OFFENSIVE PARTY THEMES

Taken straight from the party planning archives of actual colleges and universities, these are some of the best themes we’ve seen:

- Heroes and Villains
- Disco Party
- Decade themes
- Pajama Jam
- Mardi Gras
- Toga! Toga!
- Famous Couples
- Winter Wonderland (snow party)
- Safari
- Rodeo
- Movie themes
- Mad Men or other television show themes
- Viva Las Vegas
- Castaway/Shipwrecked
- Sporting event themes
- Pirates of the Caribbean
- “P” is for Party (alphabet themes)
- Party like a Rock Star (celebrity themes)
- Once Upon a Time (fairy tale themes)
- Casino Night
- April Fool’s Day Party
- Fire and Ice
- Superheroes
- My Tie (mystery match-up themes)
- Kat in the Hat
- Outer Space/Aliens
- Premiere (Hollywood theme)
- New Year’s Eve Again
- Night Out on the Town (city or downtown theme)
- Under the Sea (ocean theme)