

Before our time...

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by Ed Wigmore

Only one of the 12 fraternities and sororities on the University of Alberta campus retains racial and religious discrimination clauses in its constitution — and even this fraternity, if it had its way, says it would have these clauses stricken from it.

In addition, four fraternities and sororities say they have never had members of any racial group other than whites, and two say they have never had members who were non-Christians.

Five of the 12 fraternal organizations actually have, or have had, both persons who were non-white and non-Christian. The others are somewhere in between.

One of the eight fraternities is primarily for persons of the Jewish faith, and has no non-Jewish members in its Alberta chapter, although it does have non-Jewish members in some of its American chapters.

The fraternity that does retain discriminatory clauses says its local chapter feels members of all races and creeds should be eligible to join, but its international coun-

cil, which is composed mainly of southern U.S. chapters, insists on retention of the bias clauses.

Constitutions of the other local chapters are also handed down by national or international councils, and the local groups, although they make their own by-laws cannot change the clauses which say what types of persons they can or cannot receive as members.

The fraternities and sororities are governed by these higher councils, who send travelling secretaries around periodically to visit the chapters.

The general feeling of those chapters who have discriminatory clauses or don't have any non-whites or non-Jews is: "We would like to have these fellows, providing they measure up to general standards, but trouble could develop at such times as an international convention, for example, and we don't want to hurt their feelings."

Several of the fraternity executives interviewed said discrimination always exists in some form in fraternity rushing and pledging.

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purpose of a fraternity," said one president. "Fraternity brothers can't be expected to take someone they are not going to get along with. However, we try to pick out men on general social acceptability."

Some of the executives indicat-

ed they felt discrimination was practiced in other fraternities "whether they care to admit it or not." One of them cited the "blackball" system as an example.

Here are brief summaries of the situation in each of the fraternities and sororities connected with the University of Alberta: —

FRATERNITIES

Delta Kappa Epsilon has no discriminatory clauses concerning race, color or creed. The "Dekes" have a Jewish member this year, and have had a Jewish president. They are rushing a Chinese this fall. Several years ago, this fraternity rushed a student from the West Indies, but he did not join due to financial reasons.

Delta Upsilon has "no discriminatory clauses whatever." It has some Jewish members, but has never rushed any Negroes. The current executive member says the racial problem has never risen in this group, and "we don't like to make a problem out of one that hasn't met us yet."

Kappa Sigma had both racial and religious discrimination clauses until two years ago, when an international conclave struck them out of the constitution. This was a change from the original constitution of 1869 in this fraternity. Like most other fraternities, however, Kappa Sigma must send lists of potential members to its national council for approval. The local chapter does not have any members who are non-white or non-Christian.

"We can rush, pledge and initiate anyone we like," stated an executive officer.

Lambda Chi Alpha retains both racial and religious discrimination clauses in its constitution. The constitution does not allow

persons other than white Christians, and is dictated to the local chapter by an international council. Lambda Chi is one of the largest international fraternities. It has 152 chapters, and most of them are in the southern United States. Only four are in Canada.

"The problem has come up

"Discrimination of some type is necessary, or you defeat the purpose of a fraternity."

several times this year," a member said, "and we wish we could take some of these persons. But we have no choice; it is in the constitution."

The local chapter feels there is a move afoot to remove this clause, but says it will be a slow process, due to the feelings in the southern U.S. The chapter says, however, members of other races and religions are always welcome as guests around the house. A Japanese student lived here a few years ago but didn't become a member.

Phi Delta Theta has no restrictive clauses and says its membership is open to persons "generally socially acceptable." This fraternity has never rushed a Negro or a Chinese but had a Jewish pledge recently who didn't become active. A person needs 100 percent backing to become a pledge.

Phi Kappa Pi is strictly a Canadian fraternity and does not have any American inhibitions — thus no discriminatory clauses. The local chapter has active members of various races and creeds, and has rushed Negroes in the past.

Sigma Alpha Mu has only Jewish members in its Alberta chapter, but does not have any restrictive clauses. There was a bias clause, but it was taken out several years ago. Several of the other national and international chapters have non-Jewish members; the president of the founding chapter in New York is a non-Jew.

The local chapter has never rushed a non-Jew, but says there is nothing in its ritual that couldn't apply to a person of any religion.

Zeta Psi has no discriminatory clauses. The Alberta chapter has a Jewish active, and a person from Arabia, in addition to several Jewish alumni.

"We feel it adds something to our fellowship," the president stated, "and we enjoy having these fellows. It makes a better-rounded brotherhood."

SORORITIES

Delta Delta Delta retains no bias clauses. It has a Jewish active, a Jewish pledge, and has had a Japanese active. It makes its own rules on membership.

Delta Gamma has no discriminatory clauses, and two years ago pledged two Jewish girls. A non-Christian girl could pledge and go active, but would have to accept some Christian principles.

Kappa Alpha Theta can rush any persons it wants to, has no discriminatory clauses, either racial or religious. It has a Jewish pledge and a Mormon pledge, and had a Jewish active last year.

Pi Beta Phi retains no bias clauses. Although it has no Jewish pledges or actives this year, it has had them in the past.

All four sororities are members of the National pan-Hellenic Conference, and so have somewhat the same methods of greeting potential members.



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