

A look at fraternity life as a segment of the university

Women's fraternities - a quick assessment

By CAROL NUGENT
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So, you would like to know everything about women's fraternities.

Well, sit down, relax, and be prepared for a jumbled unravelling of what they're all about. I can't discuss my ideas of fraternity life in the conventional terms of sisterhood, and foreverness; to me that is all implied and will come out by itself, so I'll just talk.

Lets see, where can I begin? I could tell you of all the parties, fun get-togethers, all the crazy, easily remembered little incidents that pop into mind. Or I could describe the early morning Songfest practices, the work parties, at which no one really does any work, or the gold star race for giving blood. But there I go getting ahead of myself. I'll try and start from the bottom.

To look at the situation quite coldly for a moment, you'll recall having heard many times before that there are approximately 15,000 students on this campus. Of that number, I think we can assume, human nature being what it is, that besides being here for an education, a lot of those 15,000 are looking for other things too—things like meeting other people, taking part in activities other than just studying and writing term papers. There are a hundred groups on campus which provide an opening for involvement in university life. Fraternities are one of these.

Yet there is something about a fraternity which makes it different. Maybe we could bring it down to the fact that fraternities are based on people, not just any kind of people, but people that want to meet other people, get to know other people, get close to other people. Everything in a women's fraternity revolves around this idea. I think when a girl decides to belong to a women's fraternity she is saying: "I want to get to know you. You're all different, but that's what makes you individuals, and it is going to be

pretty great forming friendships with a lot of different individuals. I can talk to the guy or girl sitting next to me in class, but the chances are pretty poor that we'll let down enough barriers to know each other."

I don't think I have to tell you how a person begins to know people, but I'll say it anyway. You get to know people by being with them. That's what we do in fraternities. We do things together—things like meetings every week, taking part in community charity drives, getting teams out for intramurals, having parties with other fraternities or various groups on campus. Everything we do involves us in other activities on campus; thus we get to know people outside of our own group.

Some of the greatest experiences in a women's fraternity are gained through doing things for other people. Caroling at Charles Camsell Hospital, or working with the blind, become standardized happenings because they are enjoyable, self-rewarding experiences. Even this begins immediately within the fraternity, where a friend when needed is always there, or help in studies is always available.

We have our serious side also. Many of fraternity girls are involved in student council work, or in organizing special university events on campus. These are the people who use those qualities which have been brought out in fraternity life, to extend their participation in all facets of the university.

The list is endless. I could go on and on describing all those things which make fraternity life so meaningful to each of us who has experienced it. It does not end with the finish of a university career. It continues on in the presence of old and new friendships. It is an association built on the interest and willingness to expand the bonds of friendship found within the fraternity during college life.



Men's fraternities — a tradition

• LEADERSHIP

Fraternities have always been instrumental in organizing events for the Campus, often at the request of Students' Council. The first Varsity Guest Weekend was planned by the Inter-Fraternity Council and Panhellenic Society in 1951.

Individual Fraternity members will be found in every organization on Campus, Fraternity members usually compose the majority of the Students' Union Executive.

This leadership and initiative on Campus, provides such community involved citizens as: Peter Lougheed, Morris Weinlos, and Hu Harries. All graduates of the U of A and Fraternity members.

• SCHOLARSHIP

Ever since their establishment on Campus, in the 1930's the Fraternities, have been primarily concerned with the goals of the University—in seeking "whatsoever things are true."

The scholarship programs of the individual Fraternities help the student "settle down" and study. Through these programs, Fraternities have been able to keep their average above the all men's average. Also, several Rhodes scholars such as: Sheldon Shumir, and Kin MacKenzie.

According to a recent study, 59 per cent of fraternity members "persist to graduation," compared to 47 per cent for non-fraternity members.

• ATHLETIC

Men's Fraternities participate very actively in the intramural programs, and consistently rank very highly in the standings. In addition to this there are several sports events organized by the IFC.

The varsity teams always have a large number of fraternity members.

• SOCIAL

Every Fraternity has a well planned year of social activities, for the members to partake of. Fraternities aim to develop the individual by means of group experience for each of its members who live, work and socialize together. Good manners, good taste, and good championship are a part of the training of every Fraternity member.

• SERVICE

Through their many and varied charity or altruistic projects Fraternities at the U of A. serve both the campus and community.

Songfest was originally started as a means of raising funds to support a foster child, and now the proceeds are used to provide scholarships on this campus. Other community projects supported by the Fraternities include: The United Community Fund Drive, The Red Cross Blood Drive, The Heart Fund, The Poppy Fund, The Robin Hood school for retarded children, Share; in fact if there is any project with a worthwhile aim, the Fraternities will be found supporting it to the fullest.

• FRIENDSHIP

"A Fraternity at the U of A, is a home away from home, a place where a young man can be himself, relax, and learn in a spirit of brotherhood, and grow in the living workshop of Fraternal association."

We in Fraternities at the U of A feel that the companionship of congenial friends is the central factor around which Fraternities and their members develop.

The Greek society of antiquity, from whence we derive our names, we also derive **The Culmination of: Leadership, scholarship, athletics, social, service, and friendship—That Tradition of: "The well-rounded man."**

Student as citizen — reality or a myth?

No intelligent argument can be given to limit a student's role to either the simple study of course material and self-interest or a total concern for societal problems and the absence of self-interest.

Education is the process whereby individuals are developed to the fullest so that they can be responsible and meaningful members of society.

A student who comes to university solely to study course material or to learn a profession (or just to get married) is not developing himself to the fullest. Society is an integral part of the individual. The individual must understand society and his interactions with society in order even to begin a real study of himself. Ignoring

the problems of society will not contribute to their solution; society may break down. This final breakdown will not serve the student's own self-interest and hence he has defeated himself.

A student whose sole interest is in the problems of society at the expense of self-development also becomes involved in contradictions. The student may think he has reached a true understanding of societal problems, but because of a limited self-development, he may not understand the problem in depth. He is also severely limited in his ability to foresee a solution. Even if the solution is found, he is severely handicapped by his lack of power, prestige, and knowledge when he tries to

implement the solution.

Of course the totality of the above thesis is essentially wrong. In a society that has adequate communication among sub-societies, specialists and extremists play an important role. Often, it is the specialists who develop the tools for solving problems, while the extremists contribute publicity and attention to the problems societies face.

However it is still the individual with a balanced education who must implement the solution, for only he has the power to see how the solution affects all of society. It is only he who can make sure the solution benefits all of society and not just a small segment of it. It is still impossible

for one man to implement these solutions. Thus the powerful segments of society must consist mostly of people with the same general education.

Hence, it is important to develop an ecology of specialists and extremists outnumbered by a large group of individuals with a good general education. There must also remain a dynamic equilibrium between active and resistive forces to prevent the implementation of weak partial solutions before adequate analysis.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that there is really only one side to this question. A good student must be a good citizen. A good citizen is a good student. Richard Hewko grad student