

Sororities, fraternities appeal to diverse group

Many find niche in social organizations

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To pledge or not to pledge? That is the question. With approximately 15 to 20 percent of UNC students involved in Greek organizations, obviously something is attractive about Greek life. But those same features that attract potential fraternity and sorority members deter other students from becoming a part of the Greek system.

The choice is yours

"For some people it's a way to make new friends," said Joanna Carey, a sophomore Kappa Alpha Theta member from Tallahassee, Fla. "For others who have been exposed to the sorority system by their sister or mother, it's the way they've been brought up."

According to Pam McDonnell, a senior from Hackensack, N.J., and former president of the Black Greek Council, "Idealistically, people choose to be in sororities or fraternities because they hope to achieve goals for themselves."

Sororities are ideal for someone who wants to be involved in a campus organization with social benefits, said Joy Diamond, a freshman Phi Mu member from Canton, Ohio.

"The amount of people you get to know right away and the connections you can make through the sorority are reasons I chose to rush," Diamond said.

Also, joining a fraternity or sorority can give UNC "a small school quality," said Chris Pugh, a junior Phi Delta Theta member from Charlotte. He also said that Greek life provides a home away from home for many members.

Going Greek

The benefits of being Greek

include exposure to a variety of people and activities, new friendships and a home away from the dormitory, Carey said.

"Your brothers or sisters are people you can rely on," McDonnell said.

According to Layton Crost, a freshman Sigma Nu member from Charlotte, being in a fraternity has given him the opportunity to get to know a diverse bunch of guys extremely well. "It is really incredible how tight we all are. I have really made lifelong friends," he said.

Russell Dula, a junior Omega Psi Phi member from Chapel Hill, said, "The closeness associated with myself and my line brothers is very dear to me."

"Through the pledging process I made nine best friends," Dula said. "I always have someone I can count on."

After two months of grueling pledging, becoming a brother was so important to Dula that he had the Omega symbol branded on his upper arm because he wanted to show that Omega will always be a part of him.

In addition to the many social functions such as cocktails, formals and weekly mixers, members have the benefit of prepared meals and a comfortable place to relax among friends.

Responsibilities of a Greek

Once in a Greek organization, members are expected to meet certain guidelines. Though duties vary from group to group, weekly chapter meetings are mandatory, according to John Carey, a freshman Sigma Chi member from Hartford, Conn.

According to Diamond, members of Phi Mu who miss chapter meetings are fined \$5 unless they are sick or have another good reason for

their absence.

After repeatedly missing chapter meetings, a member may be put before the standards board, at which time it is decided whether or not she will be suspended from chapter events. Suspension can last from one to four weeks and includes dances and other such social functions.

In addition, "members are expected to be at most of the meals and pay their dues," John Carey said.

Sororities' dues for non-residents are approximately \$800 per semester including meals and \$1,500 per semester for residents. Fraternity dues range from roughly \$750 per semester for those who don't live in their houses to \$1,500 per semester for live-ins.

The cost of black fraternities averages around \$50 per year, while black sororities cost about \$50 per semester, McDonnell said.

Members who fail to pay their dues may be declared inactive, which often results in losing privileges such as eating at the house and participating in house functions.

The national chapters usually decide the penalties for rule violations, said Becky Mustard, president of the Panhellenic Council, the governing body of sororities. Often there are ways in which a member can compensate for his or her infractions through kitchen or hostess duty.

Other duties of a Greek member include participation in such activities as rush, study hours, Derby Days, Greek Week and each organization's national fund-raising events.

Paying the price

Cost often prevents people from becoming Greek. "Financial obligations are a definite disadvantage," Diamond said.

Sharon Sever, a sophomore from Shelby, de-pledged Phi Mu for



DTH/David Surowiecki

Members of the Delta Phi Epsilon sorority raise money for cystic fibrosis with a balloon ascension

exactly that reason.

"It was really hard for me to get over there (the house) too often, and as a result I didn't have the sense of sisterhood everyone else seemed to have," she said. "I felt that I wasn't getting enough out of it for the amount of money I was spending."

Dula, on the other hand, said, "The cost wasn't a factor to me. I would have overcome any obstacle to have the opportunity to pledge. I already had it in my mind that I wanted to be an Omega and no cost was too high."

McDonnell said the low cost of black greek organizations rarely deters pledging.

Lack of time also can prevent students from joining a Greek organization. "I haven't had the time nor the energy to concern myself with fraternities so far," said Joseph Holt, a freshman from Fayetteville. When asked what he thought distinguished Greeks from non-Greeks, Holt replied simply, "Three letters."

Chris Ellis, a sophomore from Butner, said "there are enough other student groups on campus that I can be part of."

"My freshman year I didn't need to get involved in something so time-consuming," said Michelle Reid, a freshman from Washington, D.C. "I wanted to get accustomed to my work load and my schedule."

Others simply don't have the desire to pledge. Devon Gambrell, a

freshman from Monroe, Ga., initially considered rushing a sorority but said that without Greek life she has made friends and doesn't feel like paying to make more.

Nothing's perfect

One of the disadvantages of Greek life is that it can be somewhat sheltering, McDonnell said. "It can both expand you and seclude you from some spheres of life." Often members are inclined to associate with fellow Greeks rather than try new organizations, she said.

This can happen with rushees, especially out-of-staters, who pledge their freshman year, Mustard said. "Although sororities can open up many different doors, there is the potential to close yourself off to other campus activities," she said.

Another disadvantage, McDonnell noted, is how the campus community looks upon Greeks. Stereotypes persist in the minds of many students.

The stereotypical Greek

"I think the fraternity image at Carolina is really conformist," said Matt Ginn, a junior from Harrisburg. "A lot of the appearance stereotypes hold true, but on the personal level, they don't hold that true."

Dula said that many non-Greeks have the attitude that Greeks are

elitist.

"Some of the fraternity people think they are better than others," said Steve Bass, a sophomore from Raleigh. "For certain Greek organizations you need to have the right amount of money, the right clothes, the right background."

But, Dula said, "The only thing true to that is that we've endured something to become brothers or sisters."

According to Matt Schofield, a sophomore Sigma Alpha Epsilon from Greensboro, many of the stereotypes of Greeks are derived from movies such as "Animal House" and "Revenge of the Nerds."

"Of course there inevitably are some of those types but as with all stereotypes, they are just too much of a generalization," he said.

"Some of the fraternities try to live up to their stereotypes," said Joe Bedell, a freshman from Syracuse, N.Y.

But Diamond insists that the stereotypes are not justified. "When you get a group of 150 people together you can't fit one stereotype to them," she said. "One hundred and fifty girls cannot possibly be the same."

McDonnell said that in the future she would like to see Greeks and non-Greeks work together at combatting stereotypes. "Stereotypes work to cause separatism," she said.

Hazing: Rites of passage increasingly outlawed

By **ADAM BERTOLETT**
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In the last 10 years more than 40 college students across the country have died in fraternity hazings and hundreds have been injured.

Last winter, an inebriated fraternity pledge at UNC was tied up naked to the swing on the porch of the Alpha Delta Pi house as part of pledge initiation, according to Sallie Bean, house director of Chi Omega sorority. Another drunk fraternity pledge was blindfolded and led into the Phi Mu house where he was bound naked to a post, Bean said.

Due to incidents like these, hazing is now outlawed in 22 states including North Carolina. North Carolina law states that it is illegal "to annoy any student by playing abusive or ridiculous tricks upon him, to frighten, scold, beat or harass him, or to subject him to personal indignity."

Hazing is pledge education brought to a perverse extreme. Pledge education usually includes kitchen duty, house cleaning, running errands and other chores. Pledges are also expected to know information and trivia about their fraternity or sorority.

"The purpose of pledge education is for the pledge class to go through similar things together. It's supposed to strengthen their unity," said Andre Zwilling, a former member of Delta Upsilon at UNC. "Hazing occurs when the learning aspect of pledge education is forgotten and indignation becomes prime."

This indignation can easily lead to injury or death. At the University of Texas, a freshman died of alcohol poisoning after being forced to drink more than half a bottle of rum as part of pledge initiation. Two winters ago a pledge at Alfred University in New York drank a bottle of Jack Daniels, a bottle of wine, and a six pack of beer, and was then locked in the trunk of a car. He died of alcohol poisoning and exposure.

In 1987, a brother at Omega Psi Phi at North Carolina A&T was sentenced to two years in prison and six months probation for beating pledges with a 2-by-4 block of wood.

As a result of hazings like these, a hazing committee was formed at UNC last year under Lee Marks, assistant to the dean of students.

"Hazing is up on campus — especially with women," Marks said. "The purpose of the committee is to



alleviate the situation and to increase awareness of the problem."

Paige Elrod, a junior on the committee, said that problems with hazing occur when sorority pledges go on treasure hunts or chases where they drink alcohol and have embarrassing things done to them.

There's usually one small group in the sorority that had to go through hazing and they believe that the new pledges should also have to go through it, Elrod said.

The committee would like to have sororities replace pledge hazing with an activity that is fun for the whole group like a fund-raiser or a party. One creative example of an alternative to hazing comes from the University of Denver. Earlier this year, the Beta Theta Pi house there decided to replace their traditional "hell week" of pledge hazing with a hiking and rock climbing trip through Outward Bound.

"We're fortunate that hazing is defined in North Carolina," Marks

said. Another purpose of the committee is to help people understand that hazing can include emotional abuse as well as physical abuse.

Many people do not realize what a serious problem hazing is. "Any house that hazes would probably lose its chapter," Zwilling said. "I don't think there's a problem (with hazing) at UNC — nothing that jeopardizes anyone's health or safety."

Right now, the committee is working on ways to spread awareness of hazing. The members are thinking of putting on a skit about hazing that would address the problem with humor to make it interesting and fun as well as informative, Elrod said.

"We want to get all the sororities together and going on this before we involve fraternities," Elrod said.

Although the committee grew out of a concern for sorority hazing, Marks said that in the future the committee will address the problem of hazing at fraternities also.

Hopefuls rush for opportunity to pledge sorority of choice

By **ANNA TURNAGE**
Staff Writer

The screams can be heard a block away as excited sorority members dance around and sing on the front lawns of the stately old houses on Franklin Street. It's UNC's annual bid night, the final stage of sorority rush.

Every fall nearly 1,000 girls of all ages, majors and backgrounds gather together in the race to join the sorority of their choice.

Some will walk away elated, while others will face the disappointment of not receiving the bid they want or getting no bid at all.

The whole reasoning behind spending two weeks rushing from house to house, going to parties, meeting too many people to remember and facing possible disappointment is simple. "It's a way to meet a lot of people in a short time, so we need a structured system like rush to provide that for those who want it," said Lee Marks, faculty adviser for the Panhellenic Council, the governing body of the women's Greek system.

"It's hard to come to a school as big as Carolina and find friends and a place to identify with. Joining a sorority is one way to do that," said Becky Mustard, president of the council.

"Sororities offer a lot of opportunities to get involved on campus," she said. "The sororities are there for you and they want you to come and try it out."

Rush "can be hectic, exciting and confusing, but on the most part it's a good experience to go through rush," Mustard said. "The most important thing is to go through it with an open mind."

The process begins at the end of each school year with a sign-up in

the Pit. The council also holds sign-ups through mail in the summer and again in the fall before the formal process begins.

At the beginning of formal rush each fall, the rushees consult with rush counselors, who guide them through the process and help answer any questions they may have.

"They're an unbiased counseling figure for rushees," Mustard said. "During rush period counselors are not allowed to reveal which sorority they're in or associate with that sorority until it's over."

The process consists of four rounds, held over a two-week period. During the first two rounds, the rushees travel to all 16 houses to meet and mingle with members.

"The first two rounds are the hardest," said Casey Hickey, a senior from Greensboro who was a rush counselor this past year. "It's all real structured and you only have a certain amount of time to spend with each girl. Most of the time you feel like you're being hoarded around," she said.

"It's a real exercise in your cocktail skills," said Mary Pat Carmel, a junior from Greensboro who rushed three years ago. "You have to sell yourself quick and that's it. If you can't do that it can be a real uncomfortable experience."

According to Hickey, "It's more frustrating than anything, but no one's been able to figure out a better way to handle over 1,000 girls."

Each round allots more time to spend with the rushees, Hickey said. The fourth and final round, called Pref Night, is the night when all rushees pick three sororities by preference and hope to get a bid from one of them.

"Some girls may only put down one or two, but it's better to leave

your options open and put down three," she said. "It can be real disappointing if you only choose one and then you get cut on bid night."

On Bid Night, rushees meet with their rush counselors, who has a list of who got bids and who didn't. The rushees who get bids go to the sororities for the Bid Night party.

"Some girls feel like if you're not Greek, you're nothing," Hickey said. "For those girls who don't get bids it can be a real emotional letdown. A lot of girls get pressure from home because their mother was in a sorority or their boyfriends put a lot of pressure on them."

As a rush counselor, Hickey was trained by Student Health Service to help bidless rushees cope if they become over-emotional. "We try to inform them of other options on campus and let them know that it's not the end of the world, that there's always next year," she said.

"There are a lot of people who get incredibly stressed out," said Carmel. "They need to understand that it's not that important. You're going to have friends whether you're in a sorority or not."

One of the main setbacks of formal rush is that there is not enough time to spend with each rushee, said Erika Huth, a junior from Clayton. Huth is a member of Delta Phi Epsilon, which holds informal rush.

"In informal rush there are no rules," she said. "We can set our parties anytime we want and we can spend as much time as we want with the girls."

According to Marti Bradshaw, rush chairman last year, informal rush is less stressful. "It's a lot more relaxed," she said. "You get to know them (rushees) for who they are, not just on the surface."