

Advantages of Greek Life on College Campuses

Greek societies as a whole have made a positive impact on college campuses and communities throughout the nation. They're involved in community service, philanthropy and often make a significant contribution to the diversity of the student body (David, 2004). Each has its own unique, rich legacy that carries on the traditions of a higher institution.

Sorority and fraternity members invest ample time and effort to achieve and maintain their memberships, and their social lives revolve around such personally important groups (Crandall, 1988). In essence, these organizations provide a market for students to “invest” in while they are students (Jackson, 2002).

Overarching Values to joining a Greek organization:

1. Helps with a student's initial transition to college.
2. Provides unique opportunities for working with peers.
3. Offers social-cultural opportunities.
4. Fosters lasting friendships and fraternal spirit.
5. Provides opportunities for professional growth and leadership development.
6. Develops a feeling of mutual interest and responsibility, both personally and professionally.
7. Helps to instill a healthy professional spirit among the members and the other students in the campus, department, or school (adapted from Pi Kappa Epsilon, 1991).

Individual Psychological Value:

- According to Paxton and Moody (2003), centrality within a friendship network increases emotional attachment to a group.
- Members of subgroups that are internally connected to one another (i.e. a fraternity or a sorority) show higher emotional attachment to the group as a whole.
- Using the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner, 1982), individuals work to construct positively valued self-concepts.
 - These self-concepts comprise two distinct components: personal identity (based on specific attributes an individual possesses) and social identity (based on membership in social groups or collectives).
- From a self-categorization/self-stereotyping perspective, when the positive qualities of an important in-group are incorporated into the self-view, both personal esteem and collective esteem are likely to benefit (Biernat, Vescio, Green, 1996).

Academic Value / Enhancement of Scholastic Achievement:

- Nationally speaking, just over 50% of students in colleges and universities go on to graduate.
- However, U.S. Department of Education data shows that members of fraternities and sororities graduate at a rate **in excess of 70%**.
- Greek organizations help students meet the challenge of balancing academics while gaining the most from their collegiate experience.

Leadership Value:

- Everyone in the fraternity/sorority has the opportunity to be a leader, they learn by doing.
- Members can acquire skills such as budgeting, holding meetings, speaking in public, motivate others, etc.
- **48%** of all U.S. Presidents, **42%** of U.S. Senators, **30%** of U.S. Congressmen / women, **40%** of all U.S. Supreme Court Justices, **30%** of Fortune 500 executives, **10%** of all listed in "Who's Who," have all been members of Greek organizations (Source: <http://www.washburn.edu/services/studentlife/stuactivities/gogreek/advantages.html>).

Community Value:

- College campuses and surrounding communities are constantly reaping the benefits of the Greek organizations.
- Philanthropies are projects and events organized by groups or individuals to benefit the surrounding community. They can involve members from one fraternity/sorority or from all members of the Greek community.
- What is most important is that fraternities and sororities work side by side to help local or national charitable organizations, developing a sense of civic responsibility.
- Among Greeks, 80% or more cite benefits in academics, leadership training and community service, creation of lifelong friendships and networks of relationships that will be useful after graduation as reasons why they joined a Greek organization.

College Retention:

- According to the Research Initiative conducted by The Center for Advanced Social Research at the University of Missouri-Columbia, membership in a fraternity or sorority has several positive impacts.
- Fraternity or sorority membership increased student retention approximately 28% more than non-Greek students.