

That's so Frat!

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ABSTRACT

This paper will investigate the primary reasons why membership for Greek Life has decreased in the recent years. The main points discussed in the paper are stereotypes surrounding the idea that Greek Life hurts your grades, you have to enjoy doing drugs, and hazing/commitment required. First, the paper explains why/how Greek Life organizations have put into action steps to keep their G.P.A.'s up and maintain certain grades. The next point will analyze how people believe that Greek Life is only for the hardcore partier, while also providing the reader with information about how Greek Life members are being accountable for their actions. Lastly, the paper will discuss the stereotypes around hazing; at the same time presenting information about new anti-hazing laws and the steps Greek Life organizations have made to comply.

Keywords: stereotype; hazing; drugs; grades; Greek Life

“That’s so frat man!” This is something college students around the nation have heard. This is due to the many stereotypes out there that are associated with Greek life. Since their creation, fraternities have been viewed as organizations directed at getting students to have a mind set that drinking and drugs are all you need to worry about; that school is not important and that it will come easy. Fortunately, people gave Greek Life a chance and resulting in a boom in Greek Life. But then something happened. Students began moving away from Greek Life. After much research, it was shown that this movement away from Greek Life was due to the stereotypes that still linger. These stereotypes being spread were affecting the future students at universities. Stereotypes like this were leaving students with an inaccurate portrayal of Greek life due to the idea that Greek Life hurts grades, its all about drugs and drinking, and the hazing you must go through.

Of course Greek Life members have to have some sort of control when it comes to their schooling, since that is why they are in college in the first place. In a study done by Dr. Fouts, a highly recognized researcher on stereotypes and their effect on the human mind, students were coming into college with the idea that Greek Life was the main cause for students to drop out or even fail out of college. After more research was done, Dr. Long associated this preconceived ideology towards Greek Life to be strongly influenced by the media. Students were relying on movies and television to show them what Greek Life was all about. What incoming students were getting from these movies and television shows was that Greek Life was all about partying and showing no interest towards school. This was a terrible thing for Greek members. In response to this idea of what Greek Life is all about,

many fraternities and sororities started implementing mandatory study sessions, required higher G.P.A.'s, and even started making pledges take part in school sponsored class that focused on studying and staying on top of your grades. These newly implemented standards show that Greek Life is more than just partying and drinking. It shows that even though people are apart of Greek Life, they are still focused on grades and schooling.

On the same note, students also started to move away from Greek Life because most of the stereotypes involved drinking and drugs. In a study done by Dr. Tollini and Dr. Wilson, they surveyed both non-Greek members as well as Greek members to see if they could find what stereotypes both parties stated. The number one stereotype listed by both parties was alcohol/drug based. Because of these findings, many Greek Life members have gone out of their way to send off a message that drinking/drugs are not the core of Greek Life. Greek members publicly state that if you are apposed to drinking or using drugs, which is fine. They still want you to go Greek. By doing this, Greek members are trying to show incoming students that drinking and drugs are not the reasons why people go Greek. Another reason why Greek members do this is because fraternities and sororities can get awards and even reduction in taxes for putting strong focus on this topic. Altogether, Greek Life is more than just a group of individuals that only care about drinking and doing drugs.

What is a paper on stereotypes towards Greek Life without a section on hazing and time commitment? To start off, everyone has heard rumors about hazing. It is no surprise that many students are turned away from Greek Life due to

these rumors. In fact, over 50 percent of incoming students, do not go Greek because of the stories they have heard involving hazing, according to a study done by Dr. Hall, a specialist in stereotype studies. Students have developed this idea that in order to join Greek Life, they must go through many uncomfortable or even hurtful tasks in order to be bonded with their fellow brothers. This became such a big deal that many states have passed laws against any type of hazing. Fraternities and sororities are strongly regulated to these laws. In response to these laws, Greek members took it upon themselves to go above and beyond. That is why many fraternities and sororities have developed councils within the fraternity or sorority that are solely focused on preventing hazing and even taking steps to punish those who step out of line. Greek Life members are stating that they are on board with all anti-hazing laws. To prove this, besides the creation of anti-hazing councils, Greek members have made it mandatory that all pledges take part in an online anti-hazing program. In order to be allowed into the fraternity or sorority, pledges must complete the course and pass an online test. Now, one may think that all Greek members do is say their fraternity or sorority does this, but then does not, but that is false. In order to keep Greek members accountable, states have given Greek Life organizations reduced social dues or taxes if all members complete this online program. This gives Greek Life even more of a reason to take part.

The future for Greek Life organizations is unknown. The problem with research today on this topic is that, the sources are biased. Most students in Greek Life are ok with all the stuff that goes on, while students not in Greek Life are not. This means that studies done on why Greek Life membership has decreased are only

theories. In the future there may be more research done, but as of now what research has been done is only the beginning. Future research may look into the reason why students chose to join Greek Life. This topic is new and young; it will not disappear anytime soon.

As you can see, Greek Life is not what you may have thought it was or what the media displays it to be. Many people do not go Greek due to the stereotypes that are surrounding it. These stereotypes portray an inaccurate picture of what Greek Life is truly about because they put forces on the idea that Greek Life hurts grades, it is all about drinking and drugs, and the hazing you must go through. Greek Life is something to try for your self because it is not for everyone, but the only way to truly know is if you take a chance and experience it first hand.

Reference

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