

## **Benefits of Greek Life**

**By Ruhi Majumdar**

Sororities and Greek life have been portrayed in various media, such as *Scream Queens*, *Legally Blonde*, *Pitch Perfect*, and *Sydney White*, which often depict excessive drinking, hazing, substance abuse, and exclusion, leading to the belief that Greek organizations are generally toxic. However, such portrayals fail to recognize the fact that 70% of students in fraternities or sororities achieve better academic success, which, in turn, helps improve their graduation rates. Moreover, 68% of Greek life students have a higher likelihood of achieving success in leadership positions and attaining their career goals (Garcia, 2022). The outdated stereotypes about sororities do not reflect the reality of the benefits they offer for individual development. As society evolves, Greek life becomes an even more valuable experience for college students. Utilizing Greek life as a source to benefit young men and women can be a vital change in university education and can create a healthy environment for young adults transitioning to middle adulthood.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Greek life expanded rapidly, with the founding of numerous fraternities and sororities on college campuses across the United States. Greek life refers to the social organizations, fraternities, and sororities on college campuses. They provide opportunities for friendship and personal growth. Greek organizations often have Greek letters as their names, like Alpha Beta Gamma, Zeta Tau Alpha, Kappa Kappa Gamma and more. Members often participate in various activities, such as community service, philanthropy, social events, and more opportunities for members to build social and networking skills. Greek life is known for its strong sense of unity and lifelong connections. It can offer a support system in

BRADFORD WRITES!  
Fall 2023

times of crises while also providing career or academic resources for members. Each fraternity or sorority has its own values and traditions but Greek life is a significant part of campus culture and can enhance the college experience for many students. These organizations became integral to campus life, fostering students' sense of belonging and camaraderie. Over time, Greek life evolved to encompass a wide range of activities and initiatives. Fraternities and sororities began engaging in philanthropy, community service, and leadership development, and now they are a staple in modern university lifestyle.

Being in a sorority can create a sense of family and friendship by providing a welcoming community of like-minded individuals. According to UCLA student and sorority member Esther Ahn, "I can definitely say that my sorority and fraternity have given me a social circle and networking so I never feel lonely. ... These people make me want to become the best version of myself, and it's really safe to say that I've found some of my best friends here and a home away from home" (Hazzard, 2022). Ahn explains how sororities offer a support system where members can lean on each other during mental crises or other conflicts, sharing experiences and creating lifelong bonds. Sororities foster a sense of sisterhood through shared traditions. Whether studying together, participating in philanthropic projects, or simply spending time with one another, sorority members often form deep friendships that can last an entire lifetime. A sorority's shared values and common goals also contribute to the sense of family, as members work together to support and provide for each other. Being in a sorority offers a unique opportunity to build meaningful connections and create a strong support network that feels like a second family.

Additionally, Greek life plays a significant role in promoting volunteerism and community service among its members. Through philanthropic efforts and service projects,

BRADFORD WRITES!  
Fall 2023

Greek organizations contribute to the betterment of society and positively impact their communities. One way Greek life encourages volunteerism is through organized philanthropy events. Each fraternity and sorority typically supports a specific cause or charity, holding fundraisers and awareness campaigns to support these organizations. These events not only raise funds but also raise awareness about critical social issues. By coming together as a Greek community, members can make a more significant collective impact and support causes they are passionate about. According to an education professor at the University of Iowa, Martin Hevel:

National fraternity staff members, campus professionals who advise fraternity or sorority communities, and undergraduate fraternity and sorority members often purport that their organizations attract leaders, provide leadership opportunities, improve leadership skills, and provide advantages in assuming prominent leadership positions on campus. Along with scholarship, service, and friendship, leadership serves as a core value of fraternities and sororities. Campus professionals plan retreats and workshops for undergraduate members to foster leadership skills; national organizations typically require chapter executive board members to attend conferences designed to convey responsibilities, develop relationships with members from other campuses, and improve leadership skills" (286).

Additionally, Greek organizations often participate in community service projects. They collaborate with local organizations, schools, and community centers to provide assistance and support. This can involve tutoring, mentoring, organizing food drives, or participating in environmental cleanups. By engaging in these service projects, Greek members develop a sense of responsibility and empathy towards their community, fostering a lifelong commitment to service. Moreover, Greek life often partners with national and international service

BRADFORD WRITES!  
Fall 2023

organizations. This collaboration allows members to engage in larger-scale service projects and contribute to causes on a broader scale. By working alongside other chapters and organizations, Greek members can learn from different perspectives and make a more significant impact on a global level. Overall, Greek life fosters a culture of volunteerism by providing opportunities, resources, and a supportive community. It instills a sense of social responsibility and empowers members to make a difference. Through philanthropy events, community service projects, and leadership opportunities, Greek organizations inspire members to be active citizens and dedicated volunteers.

Another valuable characteristic a sorority provides is academic success. Joining a sorority has been proven to have a positive influence on academic success. Sororities provide access to a supportive community of motivated individuals who can provide academic guidance along with resources and even morale. Sororities can also have study groups and more access to certain tutoring programs which benefits academic performance. Also, sororities can provide a healthy expectation of academic achievement that encourages their members to prioritize and value their education. Being surrounded by peers who value education and common activists can inspire individuals to go the extra mile in academic pursuits. Additionally, sororities create connections with alumni and professionals in various fields that provide students with valuable networking opportunities and access to internships and job opportunities that can further support academic and eventually career goals. According to the National Society of High School Scholars, “Other sororities and fraternities are actually based on academics and focus their membership on a certain academic focus like engineering or business. Spending time with like-minded peers could help you find other students to study with or to help you understand difficult course concepts.” Some sororities not only value academics but strictly depend on it, by having GPA requirements

BRADFORD WRITES!  
Fall 2023

to be involved and having sororities meant for a specific major. Overall, even though Greek life involvement does not finalize academic success it has been proven to create a healthy and positive environment for members in order to thrive in their fields.

The main reason that Greek life has had controversial opinions over the years is because of outdated stereotypes based on excessive underage drinking, substance abuse, hazing and more. Yet, what is overlooked is the fact that Greek life has evolved for the better in many ways. In the past, sororities were often associated with exclusivity and a party culture. However, in modern society there actually has been a shift towards a more inclusive and diverse Greek community. As history progresses, groups like sororities and other groups in universities evolved as well. Greek life has become more inclusive and welcoming to individuals from diverse backgrounds. Many organizations have even implemented initiatives to promote diversity and some organizations are solely for some ethnic groups to help people of color feel comfortable in their own skin and still be part of a thriving community without feeling excluded or judged. This inclusivity has allowed Greek life to become more representative and observant of the diverse student lifestyle. Furthermore, Greek organizations have taken steps to prevent issues of hazing and other dangerous behaviors. Strict anti-hazing policies and educational programs have been implemented to ensure the safety of members. According to sociology and women's studies bachelor of arts Shannon Lee Johnson, "Members of the sorority are required to have a certain number of diversity training hours per semester, which expands their knowledge about multiculturalism. Sisters may participate in training to become formal allies for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, where they learn how to be supportive and affirming of LGBT individuals" (271). Sororities have learned from the past that promoting diversity can be done by establishing things like diversity training and emphasizing inclusion by

BRADFORD WRITES!  
Fall 2023

actively building a welcoming environment for all members. By fostering an inclusive space, sororities have built a foundation based on different cultures and backgrounds that helps appreciate the uniqueness of the members and to recognize the importance of acceptance.

Ultimately, even though sororities and other Greek life organizations have had unfair circumstances in the past. The solidity of these groups are not built on the past but on the future. Greek life has proven to provide a safe haven for members by giving them a sense of belonging by also promoting their futures making sure each member is taken care of and valued. Greek organizations may still have room to grow in the future but in society today the foundation of sororities have been built on the differences and uniqueness of members in order to create unity.

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Fall 2023

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