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GREEK ORGANIZATIONS AND RESIDENCE HALLS: A MODEL FOR GREEK LIVING IN THE RESIDENCE HALLS

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Greek letter organizations have been part of the American college and university for over 200 years. They began as literary societies designed for additional academic study and intellectual debate, and eventually developed into the social organizations as we know them today. Greek letter organizations began providing residence in the middle of the 19th century when a number of universities were unable to provide housing for their students. Consequently, campus communities were saturated with boarding houses where students secured their own lodging and meals. By this time, many greek chapters had grown too large to meet in a student's room and had started renting meeting halls. Recognizing the need for meeting rooms and living quarters, fraternities began to first lease, then build and own their own homes.

Greek organizations currently maintaining chapter houses have faced difficult times. Increasing insurance premiums, costs for maintenance, and liability concerns have forced several organizations to look for alternate housing options. A potential solution to the need for fraternity and sorority housing is possible through the cooperation of university residence hall administrators and greek leaders (Sutherland, 1983, p. 4). Universities with partially filled residence halls could convert this empty space into campus housing for greek.

Is it possible that the philosophies and goals of residence halls, as well as the beliefs of student personnel administrators, will "harmonize" with those ideals on which greek organizations were founded and greek leaders espouse? This question serve as the basis for the balance of this paper. The philosophies and goals of both groups are examined, followed by a model for greek living in the residence halls. A scenario already in place at several colleges and universities, if successful, may create a new era for greek organizations and residence hall systems.

Residence Halls-Philosophy, Objectives and Goals

In residence halls, students encounter diverse experience, learn to make individual choices, develop their own schedules, and become more self reliant. Frederickson (In Wallace, 1980) states that:

"our purposes for having residence halls are not only to provide places to eat and to sleep but also to provide educational support services to the university
by creating and maintaining a learning environment and by ensuring an opportunity, through guided group living, for the personal, scholastic, and social improvement of the residents" (p. 23).

Residence halls strive to create an environment that meets the student's needs. They aim to provide an optimum environment for fostering educational growth, opportunities for diverse and numerous social contacts, and comfortable living and dining accommodations. Administrators involved with residential living recognize the importance of student development and ingrained into the philosophy of residential living is its influence on student development. Chickering (1969) proposes that it is in the context of friendships formed that values, future plans and aspirations, and decisions about current behavior are developed. He believes that the housing unit becomes a subculture molding behavior and attitudes to its own values and standards, and finds that opportunities are provided for a student to observe the impact of personal behavior on other individuals.

In a final look at residence hall ideals, Decoster and Mable (1980) present a hierarchical scale of five general philosophical objectives for college student housing.

Level One-Provision of a satisfactory physical environment through new construction and renovation.
Level Two-Adequate care and maintenance of the physical facilities.
Level Three-Establishment of guidelines that provide structure for compatible and cooperative community living.
Level Four-Development of an interpersonal environment that reflects responsible citizenship and a concern for others, as well as an atmosphere conducive to learning.
Level Five-Opportunities for individual growth and development. On the hierarchical scale presented, one level must be accomplished before moving on to the next. These objectives serve as an excellent outline to explain the philosophical beliefs of residence hall administrators.

Greek Organizations-Philosophy, Objectives and Goals

The goals of today's fraternity and sorority members are basically the same as those on which the organizations were begun. As Beach asserts, "Today's members of Greek letter organizations assert that they seek a sense of community in an impersonal world, a sense of meaning on a large and heterogeneous campus, a sense of mission and coherence in a fragmented education" (1973, p. 111). The fraternity ideal remains committed to the task of helping students develop themselves as whole human beings, not merely as academic performers. Owen and Owen (1976) find that fraternity attempts to "shape individual character in relation to the values and ideals of human excellence" (p. 15). In the same idealistic vein, the National Interfraternity Conference Decalogue states that "the college fraternity accepts its role in the moral and spiritual development of the individual." It promotes fraternity as "the developer of social graces, the art of good living, the developer of courtesy and kindness, and aims for a social mind in a social body" (In Kuh, 1982, p. 6). While this idealistic philosophy is well intended and valid, more realistic goals and objectives have been designed for Greek organizations. The goal statements of Greek organizations tend to focus on three major elements: 1) "the growth of individual members in their academic, social, moral, and spiritual lives, emphasizing character building and realizing individual potential;" 2) "experience in human relationships and responsibilities of citizenship;" 3) "service to others, especially in the community adjacent to the campus" (Riker, 1983, p. 63). A major aspect of this philosophy is the commitment to fellow members, the university community, and academics.

Academics and community, among others, are vital concerns for Greek organizations and must be recognized and developed by fraternity leaders. For continued fraternity and sorority prosperity, Greek leaders must "dedicate themselves to helping members understand their individual roles in maintaining an environment conducive to attaining personal as well as group or organizational goals" (Kuh, 1982, p. 2).

Chickering's three proposals for student development are easily applicable to Greek organizations and prove themselves as fine standard statements for student development in group living situations. Greek organizations and residence halls attempt to develop a sense of community among residents and encourage social interaction and independence, and support the personal, scholastic, and social improvement of residents.

The hierarchical scale Decoster and Mable present is easily adaptable to chapter house living. Both residential facilities must strive to satisfy each objective in hierarchical development.

The basic difference between Greek organizations and residence halls is the differing levels of commitment and interaction experienced. The Greek ideal stresses strong commitment from members and ingrafts this belief to those affiliated. The philosophy speaks of mutual trust and support obtained through hours of close interaction. It is the organization's mission and the member's interest to assist in each other's social, moral and academic development. This "tight bond" strengthens the group's homogeneity and commitment from within.

The residence hall philosophy lacks this sense of trust and continual dedication and commitment. The resident may choose to leave the residence hall while the Greek member is a "member for life". Secondly, the residence hall philosophy considers the development of the student's interaction skills with many different groups of people a priority, while the Greek organization simply
continues to stress the "closeness" of fraternity. Lastly, a difference for consideration is the presence of staff in the residence halls, while there is no supervision (other than a house director in some situations) in the chapter house. Staff members are vital to the success of both philosophies' implementation.

A Model For Greek Organizations Living in University Residence Halls

Assuming that the two groups' philosophies are satisfactorily compatible, an attempt can be made to house fraternities and sororities in residence halls. Keeping the objectives and goals of each group in mind, a model has been developed which may serve as a guideline for implementation.

An outline presented by Schuh (1987) was used to develop the proposed model. Additional elements to those devised by Schuh include one concerning rules and governance and one addressing interaction development.

Element 1-Goals
a. To adequately accommodate the Greek organization(s) within the residence hall setting.
b. To meet the needs of fraternities and sororities, based on those points which differ in the philosophies of Greek organizations and residence halls.
c. To maintain positive relations among all residents of the residence hall.
d. To work toward programming which involves all residents.

The major goal of the residence hall staff is its most difficult one, to maintain positive relations among all residents. Staff must work to make the two groups compatible with one another without jeopardizing or compromising either groups objectives and goals.

Element 2-Program Nature
Greek organizations located in the residence halls.

Element 3-Interaction Development
Interaction among all residents should be developed, with particular emphasis on positive relations between Greeks and non-Greeks.

Interactive programming should be planned so all groups come into contact with one another. Programming to avoid any disharmony and stereotyping among residents is necessary.

Element 4-Administrative Structure
Residence life supervision through the central residential life office, as well as administrative support form the residence hall staff should be provided. Additional administrative support is necessary from a fraternity national office representative and/or alumni advisor.

The residence hall staff and Greek organization leaders work in a cooperative effort. Each must understand the other's ideals and keep in mind the student's best interest.

Element 5-Staffing
A live-in, graduate advisor should be required for each Greek unit.

The advisor will serve as the resident assistant for the Greek organization. Preferably, it will be an individual who is affiliated with a Greek organization, not necessarily the one in which he/she advises. This individual will be a part of the residence hall staff and attend all appropriate meetings. He/she will work with the chapter president, alumni/chapter advisor, national headquarters, and the residence hall director to monitor and supervise the living unit.

Element 6-Performance Criteria
The Greek organization will participate in all regularly scheduled hall programming and hold bi-annual meetings with the residence team, comprised of the residence hall director, a representative of the residential life central office, and a member of the alumni board. At the spring meeting, a member of the national headquarters staff must be present. These meetings are to assess the chapter's status and any other concerns.

Element 7-Relationship to the University
The Greek organization will report to those responsible for the residence halls, as well as to any officials in student life responsible for fraternities and sororities.

Element 8-Budget
No budget is needed. The chapter will provide monies for social activities other than those provided through the residence hall programming board.

Element 9-Facilities Required
The Greek organization will need an area within the residence hall where they all may live together. This may consist of an entire floor, a section or wing of a building, or a separate building within the complex. Within each dwelling area a meeting room/lounge in which to socialize and conduct meetings should be provided.

Chapter members will dine in the designated cafeteria facilities. No tables will be set aside for the Greek organizations or any other residence hall groups unless reservation request forms have been approved by the resident director.

Element 10-Rules and Governance
All university rules will be enforced, as well as any residence hall regulations. Fraternity and sorority members must be made aware of the rights and responsibilities involved with residence hall living, and be held fully responsible for them.

Element 11-Evaluation Strategies
To evaluate the residence hall organization, measure: student satisfaction (Greek and non-Greek), administrators' reactions, conduct continuing needs assessments and environmental assessments.

Yearly reports should be submitted by the residence hall director, the graduate student advisor, chapter president, and alumni advisor to gauge student
feelings and views.

This model serves as an introduction to the development of a Greek organization residing in a residence hall. This article has examined the ideals of two important student residences on campus, residence halls and Greek organizations. Little research has been conducted concerning the feasibility of housing Greek organizations in the halls; this article attempts to address the issue and draws conclusions and recommendations based on information collected. It is hoped that further research on this topic will be conducted.

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