Why are Fraternities and Sororities Important?

American College Fraternities, unique among the educational system of the world, had their genesis almost coincident with the founding of the American Republic itself and in their growth have kept pace with our robust nation.

Every year the National Interfraternity Conference as a part of an on-going public relations effort releases updated information regarding the Greek System in the United States. In the spring of 2008 the following information was made available:

There are over 101 fraternities and sororities in the United States with 750,000 undergraduate members at 12,000 chapters with 9 million total members. Of that number:

- Approximately 80% Fortune 500 executives are Greek
- Of the nation’s 50 largest corporations, 43 are Greek
- 71% of those listed in “Who’s Who in America” are Greek
- 40 of the 47 Supreme Court Justices since 1910 Greek
- 156 Members of the current House and Senate are Greek
- 100 of the 158 cabinet members since 1900 have been Greek
- All but 3 United States Presidents since 1825 have been fraternity men

Why is Greek Life an Important Part of College Life Today?

1. Fraternities and Sororities are the most successful leadership development program for college students. Members manage organizations of up to 200 members, with housing facilities and operating budgets that run into the mid-six figures. That represents annual budgets larger than 80% of all small businesses in the North America. Financial management, conflict resolution, public relations, effective goal setting and basic democratic principles are everyday lessons for members. Comprehensive leadership programs teach values-based management skills to members. Members graduate with the management and interpersonal skills needed to excel in today’s society.

2. Fraternities and Sororities are the largest network of young volunteers in the United States. They provide 10 million hours of volunteer service a year. They mentor at-risk students, raise funds for medical research, offer aid at senior citizen facilities, build homes for the poor and collect food for the homeless. Their emphasis on service learning prepares members for a lifetime of community involvement.
3. Fraternities and Sororities are the largest, most visible and most active values-based organizations on college campuses. They share a common code of friendship, service and the pursuit of excellence. Every fraternity and sorority is guided by founding principles and values that serve as a moral beacon for their members. They use educational programming to help members incorporate these principles and values into their daily lives. Their emphasis on values helps college students form the moral foundation for their future actions.

4. Fraternities and Sororities are the nation’s largest not-for-profit student landlord. Their housing is a classic American melting pot where members from different cultures, religions and experiences live and work together on a daily basis. They own and manage $3 billion in student housing at no cost to the American taxpayers. They house 250,000 students a year in 8,000 facilities with a replacement cost and capacity that universities cannot afford to bear. Their houses operate almost exclusively on student rents. Our members have a better understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures, workplaces and communities that await them after graduation.

CONCLUSION

It is of note that fraternities and sororities have played a major role in the growth and development of the United States and its current standing in the world. The history of the United States cannot be told without telling the history of the American College Fraternity. The value systems of many of our greatest leaders, throughout our history and today, were shaped and re-enforced when they were undergraduate members in Greek organizations.