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Fraternity and Sorority Life at Saint Louis University Continues to Grow

Fraternities and sororities, otherwise popularly known as Greek letter organizations, have been part of campus life at Saint Louis University since the early 1900's. Membership has grown steadily and today over 1,600 men and women belong to 19 different chapters. More than just social groups, fraternities and sororities are values-based organizations that seek to develop better men and women.

While some members of fraternities and sororities struggle with the same challenges afflicting most college students, a recent study by Gallup showed that graduates who are members of social fraternities and sororities are more likely to thrive in their well-being and be more engaged in their professional work. Additionally, fraternity and sorority members are more likely to feel prepared for the professional world after graduation than students who are not members.

With so much focus nationally on how colleges and universities engage students, retain students, and provide student experiences that prepare them professionally, it is appropriate to analyze the impact of the fraternity or sorority experience. During the 2013/2014 academic year data were collected regarding several critical areas within fraternity and sorority life. The analysis provided a number of insights on how chapters could improve, but most importantly it showed how much of an impact Saint Louis University fraternities and sororities have on students and the St. Louis community.

Highlights:

- 19% of Saint Louis University undergraduate students are members of a fraternity or sorority chapter.
- The 2013/2014 academic year all-fraternity/sorority GPA exceeded the Saint Louis University all-undergraduate GPA.
- 43% of fraternity and sorority members achieved a semester GPA at or above a 3.5 in both the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters.
- Data obtained from the North-American Interfraternity Conference and the National Panhellenic Conference show that the combined Fraternity/Sorority GPA during the 2013/2014 academic year for SLU fraternities and sororities was much higher than the national average for Greek students.
- Members of fraternities and sororities contributed over 29,000 hours of community service during the 2013/2014 academic year. 68% of members participate in their own individual long-term service.
- Fraternity and sorority chapters donated $116,398 to local area and national non-profit charities, including the Children's Miracle Network of Greater St. Louis, the American Cancer Society, Ronald McDonald’s House, Service for Sight, Campfire USA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, St. Louis North Grand Service Project, ALS Association, the Ali Kemp Foundation, Special Olympics, and St. Jude’s Research Hospital.
- Approximately 56% of fraternity and sorority members are actively involved in something other than their own chapter, including Saint Louis University clubs, student government, service and philanthropic organizations, and local service agencies.
- 60% of all First-Year Experience student leader roles (e.g. SLU 101 leaders, Oriflamme, U101 Peer Instructors, etc.) are members of fraternity and sorority chapters at Saint Louis University.

About 19% of Saint Louis University undergraduate students are members of a fraternity or sorority chapter. All 24 fraternity and sorority chapters at Saint Louis University are represented by 3 councils, though not all chapters currently have SLU student members (5 do not). The Interfraternity Council (IFC) represents 8 on-campus fraternities, who are all nationally recognized members of the North-American Interfraternity Conference. The Panhellenic Council (PHC) represents 6 on-campus sororities, who are all nationally recognized members of the National Panhellenic Conference. The Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) represents 1 on-campus sorority and 8 city-wide fraternities and sororities, who are all nationally recognized members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). Members of the 8 NPHC city-wide chapters can be from any of the four-year colleges and universities in the St. Louis area. In fall 2014 Saint Louis University will also colonize Alpha Iota Omicron, an historically South-Asian fraternity, which will also be represented by
Membership in fraternities and sororities at Saint Louis University has grown rapidly in the past few years, but the focus on academics remains constant. During the 2013/2014 academic year the all-fraternity/sorority GPA exceeded the all-undergraduate GPA for Saint Louis University. The all-sorority GPA was higher than the all-undergraduate women’s average and the all-fraternity GPA was higher than the all-undergraduate men’s average. About 43% of fraternity and sorority members achieved a semester GPA at or above a 3.5 in both the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters. On a national level, data obtained from the North-American Interfraternity Conference and the National Panhellenic Conference show that the combined fraternity/sorority GPA during the 2013/2014 academic year for Saint Louis University fraternities and sororities was much higher than the national average for fraternity/sorority students.

Outside the classroom, approximately 56% of fraternity and sorority members are actively involved in something other than their own chapter within the Saint Louis University and local St. Louis community. They hold leadership roles in clubs, student government, service and philanthropic organizations, and local service agencies. About 29% of fraternity and sorority members hold some form of leadership role on campus. Over 60% of all First-Year Experience student leaders (e.g. SLU 101 leaders, Oriflamme, U101 Peer Instructors, etc.) are members of fraternity and sorority chapters at Saint Louis University. Nearly a third of the members of student government at Saint Louis University are in a fraternity or sorority and 1 out of every 4 Resident Assistants at Saint Louis University are in a fraternity or sorority.

All fraternity and sorority chapters participated in some form of community service during the 2013/2014 academic year and contributed over 29,000 hours of service to the community. About 47% of fraternity and sorority members participated in the annual Make a Difference Day. About 68% of members participated in their own individual, long-term service opportunities in addition to the service projects their chapters organized.

Most chapters hosted or participated in some form of philanthropy in the 2013/2014 academic year. About 33% of fraternity and sorority members participated in the annual Dance Marathon program, contributing $44,749 to the overall total raised by Saint Louis University for the Children’s Miracle Network. About 29% of fraternity and sorority members participated in the annual Relay for Life program, contributing $37,340 to the overall total raised by Saint Louis University for the American Cancer Society. Chapters raised $34,879 through their own philanthropies, which included the Ronald McDonald’s House, Service for Sight, Campfire USA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, St. Louis North Grand Service Project, ALS Association, the Ali Kemp Foundation, Special Olympics, and St. Jude’s Research Hospital. In total, chapters raised $116,398 for local St. Louis area and national non-profit charities.

Our individual chapters are also strong nationally. Eight of our 14 on-campus fraternities and sororities and 2 of our 8 city-wide chapters received national awards and recognition from their national associations in 2013. Five chapters received one of their national association’s top awards for being chapters of excellence in representing scholarship, leadership, and service. Many student leaders have been awarded significant honors by their national associations as well.

- Zeta Tau Alpha sorority was awarded the Crown Chapter award for excellence.
- Delta Gamma sorority was awarded the Patricia Petersen Danielson Award recognizing outstanding chapters in the country.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity was awarded the Buchanan Outstanding Chapter Award for being in the top 10% of chapters nationally.
- Kappa Delta sorority was awarded as a Merit chapter for the second consecutive year for being in the top 20% of all Kappa Delta chapters nationally.
- Phi Delta Theta fraternity received the Gold Star Outstanding Excellence Award for overall excellence.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated was awarded the Central Region Collegiate Chapter of the Year Award for overall excellence.
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated was awarded the Central Region Pearls of Power Award for scholarship, implementation of program initiatives, and campus leadership.

Three chapters were also recognized by local service organizations for their commitment to serving the needs of the region.
- Alpha Delta Pi sorority was selected by the Ronald McDonald House Charities of St. Louis to win their Cornerstone Award for their annual gifts that support the mission of Ronald McDonald House Charities of St. Louis year after year. Their annual gifts inspire others to also partner with Ronald McDonald House Charities of St. Louis and join the Cornerstone Society.

- Delta Gamma sorority received the Community Service Award from the Delta Gamma Center for Children with Visual Impairments for their continued support of the center. Aside from a large monetary donation in 2013, the chapter served many hours of community service for the Delta Gamma center.

- Kappa Delta sorority received the Spark Award from the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri for being positive adult volunteers who serve as role models for nearby troops. Kappa Delta sorority has volunteered with the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri for many years and continues to be a champion for girls across the region.

Fraternity and sorority life offers students many opportunities to learn and grow as students, leaders, and citizens. Chapters encourage scholarship, leadership, and service and ask their members to hold themselves to a high set of ideals and values. As a Jesuit institution, we are called to be men and women for, and with others. As members of the Saint Louis University community we are asked to find a higher purpose and a greater good. Fraternities and sororities at Saint Louis University do their best to espouse not only the values of their respective organizations, but also the ideals and tenets of the Saint Louis University mission and the Society of Jesus.

Fraternities and sororities at Saint Louis University are not without their challenges. However, it is evident based on these data that they also contribute a great deal to the overall academic and service mission of the University. Saint Louis University fraternities and sororities are a vital part of the community and have a far and wide impact on student engagement and student success. As we approach the fall semester and many new students begin contemplating whether to “Go Greek”, we hope they will consider how a fraternal experience such as this can impact their Saint Louis University experience, their student success, their personal and professional lives, and their future.

Student Involvement Center

Saint Louis University

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