

KEY FINDINGS

Greek Life Survey – 2001

Office of Student Affairs Assessment

The Greek Life Survey was conducted in the Spring Quarter, 2001 at The Ohio State University, Columbus Campus. Two phone surveys were administered – one to a sample of Greek students and the other to non-Greeks. The goal of the project was to assess the status of the Greek community prior to the implementation of the recommendations in the Greek Life Task Force Report (GLTFR). This summary highlights the findings from the survey. In addition, other institutional data sources were used to augment the survey data. For further details and additional findings, please refer to the complete report.

General Impressions of OSU and the Greek Community

- Evidence suggests that being involved in a Greek organization promotes satisfaction and connectedness with the University. For example, 91.0% of Greeks reported being either “very” or “somewhat connected” to the OSU community compared to 67.9% of non-Greeks. (See page 11)
- Greek students felt good about their Greek experience with 96.3% reporting being satisfied and 72.0% reporting that it had exceeded their expectations. (See page 12)
- The majority of non-Greeks viewed the influence of the Greek community as neither positive or negative (54.8%) and felt that the Greek community was “somewhat important” for the campus social life (55.6%). (See page 14)
- However, when non-Greeks were asked about their participation in Greek functions and if they had friends who were Greek, their responses suggest that Greek life at OSU has little influence on the college experience of non-Greeks. (See page 17)
- With 59.5% of Greek students reporting cocurricular involvement in addition to their chapter involvement and with most Greek students (98.5%) feeling supported by their chapter to be involved elsewhere on campus, it appears that Greek participation does not limit students from being involved in other ways on campus and may actually facilitate it. (See pages 15-16)

Community Service and Philanthropic Involvement

- Over 62% of Greek students participated in chapter-required philanthropic and community service activities. Over 66% (66.3%) participated in community service activities not required by their chapter, compared to 32.6% of non-Greeks. (See pages 18-19)
- The majority of Greek and non-Greek students agreed that Greek organizations raise money for charitable causes and perform hands-on community service. However, Greeks were significantly more likely to agree with these statements. (See page 19)

Membership Recruitment and Membership Education

- In the 1990 CIRP survey, 21.2% of incoming OSU students reported that there was a “very good” chance that they would join a Greek organization; in 2000, only 10.2% responded this way. (See page 3)
- In Spring Quarter 2001, there were 2234 members of Greek organizations. (See page 5)
- When asked to describe why they decided to join a Greek organization, Greek students were most likely to respond the following ways: to make friends or meet people (30.5%); to get involved or for something to do (16.2%); to make the campus feel smaller or create a sense of community (14.4%); and/or because they liked the people and felt they fit in (16.2%). (See page 21)
- Word of mouth seems to be the most effective way that students learn about Greek life – through friends (49.4%), current members (12.2%), and Greek alumni/family members (27.9%). Students also learned about fraternities and sororities at OSU through the Involvement Fair (16.9%), pamphlets/mailers (9.4%), and Summer Orientation (6.6%). (See page 22)
- When asked why they did not join a Greek organization, non-Greek students were most likely to respond the following ways: they were too busy with other activities (56.0%); they simply weren’t interested (37.8%); it was too expensive (18.2%); and/or they perceived Greek organizations to be elitist and exclusive (9.4%). (See page 23)
- Approximately 5% of Greek students responded that they had experienced uncomfortable activities during the new member process, but almost 55% said they were aware of others who had participated in activities that, if made public, would be embarrassing to the University or to the national organization. (See pages 24-25)
- The majority of non-Greek students agreed that Greek students participated in embarrassing or degrading activities during the new member period (74.4%) and that hazing is a problem in the Greek community (61.6%). (See page 25)

Academics

- Overall, the all-Greek grade point average fell just below the all-undergraduate average during Autumn 2000 and Winter 2001. Furthermore, as of Spring 2001, there were 29 chapters with grade point averages less than the all-undergraduate average and 4 chapters with averages less than a 2.25. (See page 4)
- While the all-IFC grade point averages were lower than the all-men averages, the PHA women did better academically than female undergraduates at OSU, which is not surprising since historically these groups have higher GPA requirements. In addition, in the 1997-1998 school year, PHA groups moved their membership recruitment period from autumn to winter quarter. (See page 4)
- Overall, Greek students graduated at a higher rate than did the general student population. PHA members were more likely to graduate in five years than were IFC members. For example, 84.3% of PHA members who began in Autumn Quarter of 1995 graduated in five years compared to 69.8% of IFC members. When examining the time to degree, on average, Greek students graduated at least on pace with other students at the University, if not sooner. (See pages 5-6)
- Greek and non-Greek students reported spending similar amounts of time on academic activities out of class. (See page 26)

- Most Greek students were satisfied with the level of academic support their chapter offered (92.8%) and felt that their chapter emphasized academic and intellectual development to a “great” or “moderate extent” (94.7%). (See page 27)
- Almost half of Greek students felt that their Greek membership was “very” or “somewhat helpful” to their grades. (See page 27)

Diversity

- Overall, white students were more highly represented in the Greek population (91.8%) than in the non-Greek population (78.7%). Moreover, Asian American and African American students were underrepresented. (See page 10)
- Overall, Greek students perceived their chapter and the Greek community to be more diverse and more accepting of others compared to how non-Greeks viewed the Greek community. For example, non-Greeks were significantly more likely to perceive members of the Greek community to be prejudiced or racist than were Greeks. (See pages 29-32)
- A fifth (20.7%) of the Greek students felt that their chapter was not diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. Furthermore, 44.9% responded that the Greek community was either not concerned or ambivalent about issues related to diversity. (See pages 30-31)
- However, 45.0% of Greek students reported that they had become more accepting of those who were different from them since joining the fraternity or sorority. (See page 32)

Fiscal Issues and Risk Management

- Among the Greek students, over 72% felt the cost of belonging to their chapter was “about right,” and almost 82% felt that the cost of living in the chapter house was also “about right.” (See page 33)
- However, a majority of Greek students agreed that the cost of belonging to a fraternity or sorority is a barrier to attracting new members (67.6%) and that they had members who became inactive because they were unable to pay their dues (61.8%). (See page 33)
- Over 94% of Greek students said they were knowledgeable about the risk management policies of their chapter and of their council. (See page 34)
- Most students (over 91%) reported that they had learned about hazing policies, hosting responsible social functions, and reducing high risk drinking through their chapter. (See page 35)
- Almost 80% of Greek students agreed that the stricter policies regarding social events have limited chapter social functions. (See page 35)

Alcohol and Partying

- Consistent in the findings of both the Core Drug and Alcohol Survey (see page 4) and the Greek Life Survey, evidence suggests that Greek students drink more frequently and drink greater amounts of alcohol than non-Greek students. For example in the Greek Life Survey, Greeks reported a 66.2% binge drinking rate, and non-Greeks reported a 49.2% rate. Furthermore, Greeks averaged more drinks per week than non-Greeks. They were also more likely to report an increase in their drinking since coming to college. (See pages 38-39)

- While both Greek and non-Greek students tended to agree that alcohol is a central part of the social life at OSU, non-Greeks were significantly more likely to agree. Furthermore, over 56% of non-Greeks strongly agreed that alcohol is a central part of the Greek community compared to only 17% of Greeks who responded this way. (See page 36)
- When asked specifically about their chapter, 60.3% of Greeks disagreed that alcohol is a central part of the social life, and 83.7% disagreed that there was a substance abuse problem among members of their chapter. (See page 36)

University Support of the Greek Community

- Only 37.3% of Greek students agreed that the University provides a welcoming environment for its Greek organizations compared to 87% of non-Greeks. (See page 39)
- Over 65% of Greek students expressed dissatisfaction with the level of support they receive from the University. (See page 40)
- About half of the Greek respondents agreed that the Student Activities & Campus Programs Office helps their chapter form relationships with the rest of the University (53.5%) and provides positive publicity for the Greek community as a whole (51.5%). (See page 40)
- Only half of the Greek respondents were familiar with the requirements of the GLTFR, and about half were skeptical of the report or were totally against it. (See page 40)

Additional Comments

- When Greek students were asked to make any additional comments about the Greek system at OSU, almost 22% spoke about the positive experience it had been including the way their fraternity or sorority helped them adjust to college, to develop skills, and to have fun. (See page 42)
- Others commented on the lack of university support for the Greek community (9.9%), the GLTF (3.1%), the impact of Dry 2000 (2.0%), and the negative publicity the Greek community receives (3.4%). (See page 43)

Differences between IFC, PHA, and PHC Members

- PHC members were significantly less likely to report being connected to the OSU community than were IFC and PHA members. (See page 47)
- The women in PHA organizations expressed greater dissatisfaction with their Greek experience than did members of IFC chapters. (See page 48)
- PHC members were significantly more likely to agree that Greek organizations perform community service by raising money for non-profit organizations than were IFC and PHA members. (See page 51)
- Members of IFC and PHC organizations were slightly more likely to report having experienced uncomfortable activities during pledging than were PHA members. (See page 53)
- While PHC and PHA members reported being significantly more satisfied with their chapter's academic support compared to IFC members, they were also significantly more likely to report that Greek membership was not helpful to their grades. (See page 55)

- IFC members were more likely to perceive their chapter to be diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation than the other groups (see page 56), and they reported the greatest gains in their acceptance of others. (See page 58)
- At the same time, IFC members reported that members of their chapter were significantly more likely to be prejudiced or racist than other OSU students when compared to PHC members and that members of their chapters were significantly less likely to be accepting of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals than were members of PHA and PHC groups. (See page 57)
- The three groups responded similarly with regard to questions about risk management. (See pages 60-61)
- PHA members were significantly more likely to agree that alcohol is a central part of the social life of the Greek community than were IFC members. (See page 62)
- PHC members were significantly less likely to agree that alcohol is a central part of the social life of their chapter when compared to IFC and PHA members. (See page 62)
- Members of IFC chapters reported the highest binge drinking rate at 71.0% and the highest rate of frequent bingeing at 41.4% compared to PHA and PHC members whose binge drinking rates were 62.8% and 55.2% respectively. The frequent binge drinking rate for both PHA and PHC members was 20.5%. (See page 63)
- IFC members were less satisfied with the level of support their chapter receives from the University and were less likely to agree that the University provides a welcoming environment for its Greek organizations. (See page 64)
- PHC members were more likely to agree that the Student Activities and Campus Programs Office helps their chapter form relationships with the rest of the University and provides positive publicity for the Greek community as a whole.