

FRATERNITY FORWARD COALITION PRESENTS:

What's happening in fraternity life:  
**Meet the CEOs**

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# Current Research Trends in Fraternity/Sorority Life

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# Credit hours and GPA

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Students who joined fraternity/sorority organizations had:

- more credit hours
- higher GPAs than non-affiliated students during their first year of college,
- rejecting the notion that fraternity/sorority-affiliated first-year students attain lower GPAs than non-affiliated students

17 institutions and more than 45,000 students

DeBard, R., & Sacks, C. (2011). Greek membership: The relationship with first-year academic performance. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 13(1), 109-126.



# Critical thinking and community engagement

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- Hayek et al. (2002) suggests that fraternity/sorority-affiliated students reported higher communication and critical thinking abilities
- Asel et al. (2009) found that membership in a fraternity/sorority organization is associated with an increase in community engagement and community service

Asel, A. M., Seifert, T. A., & Pascarella, E. T. (2009). The effects of fraternity/sorority membership on college experiences and outcomes: A portrait of complexity. *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors*. 4(2), 1-15.

Hayek, J. C., Carini, R. M., O'Day, P. T., & Kuh, G. D. (2002). Triumph or tragedy: Comparing student engagement levels of members of Greek-letter organizations and other students.



# Engagement, Learning Outcomes, Grades and Satisfaction with College

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Fraternity and sorority members were:

- *significantly more engaged than non-members,*
- *reported greater gains in learning, and*
- *were more satisfied with their college experiences*

Pike, G. (March 2020). *The Greek Experience Revisited: The Relationships between Fraternity/Sorority Membership and Student Engagement, Learning Outcomes, Grades, and Satisfaction with College.* [pre-publication]



# Engagement, Learning Outcomes, Grades and Satisfaction with College

## Where the information comes from:

Data used in this research came from the 2014 and 2017 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Complete data were available for **202,586 students attending 541 institutions** that participated in NSSE 2014 & 2017

The student engagement measures used in the research were 10 engagement indicators from the NSSE questionnaire, along with a measure of the number of high-impact educational practices in which the students participated

College outcomes were represented by students' self-reports of their learning and development, self-reported grades, and a measure of satisfaction with college

The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling to identify the direct and indirect relationships between membership in a fraternity or sorority and both student engagement and college outcomes

**Separate analyses were conducted for first-year males, senior males, first-year females, and senior females.**

Studying the engagement indicators, focus specifically on:

**High impact practices**

**Collaborative learning**

**Student-Faculty interaction**

**Supportive campus environment**

**Discussion with diverse others**



# Engagement, Learning Outcomes, Grades and Satisfaction with College

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- F/S reported greater gains in learning
- F/S were more satisfied with their college experiences
- F/S indirectly improved learning gains, acting through higher levels of student engagement
- Despite being less diverse than students in general, fraternity/sorority members reported higher levels of interaction with people different from themselves than did other students



# Engagement, Learning Outcomes, Grades and Satisfaction with College

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The findings of this study indicate that fraternities and sororities are not antithetical to the values of American higher education, as some have suggested

To the contrary, membership in a fraternity or sorority is associated with:

- *greater involvement in curricular and cocurricular activities,*
- *promotes student learning and development, and*
- *promotes satisfaction with the college experiences*

Furthermore, the largest positive effects were *generally found for first-year students, arguing against deferring recruitment until the second semester or second year*



# Graduation rates

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- Graduation rates after the addition of fraternities and sororities were higher than before the inclusion of Greek organizations
- The results of this study suggest that the addition of a fraternity and sorority community can have a positive overall influence on student and institutional success

Yates, R. (2020). *Student involvement and graduation rates: A quantitative study on the impact of adding a fraternity and sorority community*. [The Oracle, Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors](#)



# Mental health

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- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students report lower mean scores related to depression and anxiety.
- For depression, this was consistent for affiliated male and affiliated female students in comparison to their unaffiliated peers of similar gender identities
- Significant differences were not observed for mean anxiety scores when considering affiliation and gender
- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students have lower lifetime diagnosis of depression by a medical professional, but higher lifetime diagnosis of anxiety
- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students have higher rates of lifetime use of therapy or counseling, but lower rates of current use of therapy or counseling
- Fraternity and sorority affiliated students have a higher positive rating of campus support systems, but lower knowledge of where to go to access mental health services if needed



# Mental health

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## About the Study

Analyzed by the Post-Secondary Education Research Center  
University of Tennessee- Knoxville  
Team Leader: Dr. Patrick Biddix  
Researchers: Dr. Meghan Grace, Dr. Amanda Assalone

## Survey Details

Data from “Healthy Minds” Study – a national data set conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan

The 2018-2019 sample included 78 participating institutions and 41,302 student respondents

The findings were not consistent for affiliated non-binary students



# Life of Alumni

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Gallup Studies (2014 & 2021)

2014:

[Fraternities and Sororities:  
Understanding Life Outcomes |  
Gallup](#)

2021:

[Gallup NIC | North American  
Interfraternity Conference](#)



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# Life of Alumni

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- Based on Gallup's 30 years of research on engagement in the workplace, Gallup identified 12 elements that predict employee and workgroup performance
- Gallup also studied five areas of well-being: Purpose, Social, Financial, Community and Physical
- Well-being is the combination of all the things that are important to each individual — it is how people think about and experience their lives
- Previous Gallup research indicates, 29% of people in the U.S. *are not thriving in any of the five elements of well-being*



# Life of Alumni

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- Where graduates went to college — public or private, small or large, very selective or not selective — hardly matters at all to their current well-being and their work lives in comparison to their experiences in college
- Fraternity and sorority members are more likely than all other college graduates to be thriving in each of the five elements of well-being (purpose, social, financial, community, and physical)
- More fraternity and sorority members are thriving in “purpose” than in any other element of well-being
- These fraternity and sorority members like what they do every day and get to learn or do something interesting on a daily basis



# Life of Alumni

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- More fraternity and sorority members are thriving in the element of “social” well-being than all other college graduates
- More than half of fraternity and sorority members have strong relationships with friends and family that lead them to be thriving in the area of social well-being, compared to less than half of all other college graduates
- Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be thriving in the element of “financial” well-being than all other college graduates
- Fraternity and sorority members are also more likely to be thriving in “community” well-being than all other college graduates
- Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be thriving in the element of “physical” well-being than all other college graduates although fewer fraternity and sorority members are thriving in physical well-being than in any other element



# Life of Alumni

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- More fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they had professors who cared about them as a person, one who made them excited about learning, and had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their dreams, than all other college graduates
- More fraternity and sorority members say they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning and had a mentor who encouraged their goals and dreams
- More fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they had a long-term project that took a semester or more to complete, that they had an internship or job where they applied what they were learning, and that they were extremely involved in extracurricular activities and organizations, than other college graduates



# Life of Alumni

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- Alumni who were members of a fraternity or sorority exhibit higher emotional attachment to their alma mater, meaning that they strongly agree that their college or university was the perfect school for them, and they can't imagine a world without it
- Fraternity and sorority members are more emotionally attached to their alma mater, compared with of all other college graduates
- More fraternity and sorority members report that they have started a business than all other college graduates
- More fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that their institution prepared them for life after college than all other college graduates
- Differences between fraternity and sorority members and all other college graduates are statistically significant in favor of fraternity/sorority members when controlling for key demographic characteristics including gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as measured by first generation education status



# The role of parents in college students

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- Parental involvement with universities has received attention in the popular press.
- Parents have been characterized in media as overly involved and overly influential by college administrators.
- This study supports the value of parental involvement by demonstrating that parents and students who communicate often is associated with less drinking among first-year college students.

Small, M.L., Morgan, N., Abar, C. and Maggs, J.L. (2011). "Protective effective of parent-college student communication during the first semester of college." *Journal of American College Health*, 59 (6): pp. 547-554.



# Research Key Takeaways

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- Fraternity and sorority members tend to be happier, are more involved, and have better educational experiences than non-affiliated students
- Greek Life increases graduation rates
- Participants in Greek Life experience less depression and anxiety
- Alumni of the fraternal experience increases life satisfaction than student who did not participate in fraternity/sorority as undergraduates
- Alumni also feel more connected to their alma maters
- Parental involvement in the lives of college students matters



# Introductions and recommendations

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- Q&A about fraternity life
- Not about specific institutions
- Not about specific student's membership



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