



COURTESY JEN MILLER

Jen Miller (right) left a legacy to fellow sisters in her sorority, Delta Zeta, which extends from leadership skills to handmade rag dolls meant to be passed down to their children.

weekly meetings, you can learn these very specific rules inside and out, being useful beyond graduation in both public and private sectors.

Springboard to Leadership

Most fraternities and sororities are highly organized and structured. One person doesn't run the whole show. Members hold chair positions in academics, philanthropy, risk management, and alumni relations. There also are SG representatives, historians, webmasters—and this doesn't include members who chair special committees. This type of organized structure is a great place to start learning leadership. And the best part is that your chair has been filled by members who probably are still involved, so they can help out and give you advice.

These positions give you experience when you try for a campus-wide role, such as student senator. Being part of such a structured organization can help you in other leadership positions that may not have a defined leadership system or goals. You'll be able to apply what you've learned from your Greek organization to these other groups.

Fraternities and sororities also are governed by a group, such as the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, and National Pan-Hellenic Council, that makes sure they follow the rules. They plan campus-wide events, have their own judicial board, and attend conferences around the country. These leadership positions with great responsibilities are only held by Greek members.

Greek life can have lots of benefits besides those related to leadership, such as community service opportunities and forming bonds that can last for life. Your best bet is to look for the chapter that wants to help its members achieve and succeed during and after college. These are the chapters that'll help you fill your leadership potential and make you the best campus leader you can be.

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The Alpha Beta Chi's of Leadership

Greek life offers real-world training

By Jen Miller

When I told friends I was thinking of joining a sorority at the University of Tampa, they thought that I was insane. Hadn't I seen *Animal House*? *Revenge of the Nerds*? How could I stand being hazed? Wouldn't I become an alcoholic? Why would I want to pay for friends?

I knew these were stereotypes of the Greek community, and I was willing to give it a chance. Besides the benefits of brotherhood or sisterhood, Greek organizations offer leadership positions and training tools that you might not find anywhere else. When I joined Delta Zeta, I found that most Greek organizations are hotbeds for leadership training.

Connecting on Campus and Beyond

As editor of UT's newspaper, *The Minaret*, I needed to know as many people as possible. I had to have my finger on the campus pulse, and the Greek community formed a good chunk of the university community. I had to know who I could go to when I needed a story idea, quote, or someone to profile, and the only way to create this database is to go out and meet people. Through Greek events, I met motivational speakers; experts on domestic abuse, eating disorders, and sexual abuse; faculty and staff members; and, of course, students.

Being Greek also helped me to meet other students nationwide. National Greek organizations have conferences. While they focus on how to improve their chapters, they also hold sessions on improving academics, being a better leader, and finding community service opportunities. Conferences also allow you to meet members of your organization from around the country. These are connections you can keep up beyond graduation and establish with other sisters or brothers in local alumni chapters.

All in Favor Say "Yea!"

Most Greek organizations run their meetings according to parliamentary procedure or *Robert's Rules of Order*. These are the same set of rules used in Student Government, residence hall associations, and a host of other activities. Through

Picking a Chapter

Going through sorority recruitment and have a few questions? Skeptical about how to pick from such a wide range? Here are some tips.

- 1. Get to know the sorority's reputation.** This might mean holding off going through recruitment until you're comfortable with campus first. The University of Tampa has freshmen girls sign up before classes even begin. I waited a year, and when I went through as a sophomore, I saw how uninformed I would have been if I hadn't waited.
- 2. Ask questions.** While you might worry that you're being sized up in recruitment activities, the sororities are also trying to impress you. Ask anything and everything from the cost of dues to their academic program to how they fulfill their philanthropy requirements.

3. Check out the web site. Most Greek organizations are national, so looking at their web site can give you an idea of what the chapter stands for at the national level. Also, you could then find if the chapter on your campus has a web site so you can learn more about it outside of the recruitment sessions.

4. Ask about hazing. The last thing you want to do is join a group that'll hurt you. If they admit to these practices, move on.

5. Chapters vary from school to school. Just because your sister loves her chapter in California doesn't mean it's the same on your campus. Make sure you're evaluating the one you'll be a part of, not the one that your friend or relative loves.

6. Relax. They want to get to know the real you, so just be yourself!

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