

oregon daily emerald

Vol. 83, No. 34

Eugene, Oregon 97403

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 1981



Photo by Bob Baker

Greek renaissance sweeps the University and country

By CAROLINE PETRICH
Of the Emerald

Two students were sharing a pitcher of beer. Several times, a noisy group in the next booth interrupted their discussion.

The group next door quaffed beer enthusiastically, telling jokes between gulps.

"We have a bunch of frat men next door," said one of the students.

Her friend got up to look. "Yeah, you're right. One guy's drinking his beer — without using his hands."

That represents one example of what could be an ongoing prejudice against Greeks — men and women on campus who affiliate themselves with fraternities and sororities.

For most people, the Greek system produces a gut reaction.

Ask anyone what they think of Greeks. If they belong, they will advocate it as a great learning experience and a great way to make friends. If they don't belong, they will grumble about conformity and the "preppie" look.

"The misconception is that all we do is go to school and drink beer," complains Mark Hallquist, member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity and president of the Interfraternity Council on campus.

"We don't necessarily party within ourselves," he says. "We do social interaction with community groups.

"It's easier to criticize than go through rush," he says.

"Rush" is a semi-annual event where interested students examine the Greek system and vice versa. At the end of "Rush Week," each house chooses its new members.

Sororities also get their share of discrimination.

"Airheads" is a common reference to Greek women. Says one anonymous man, "All they worry about is being preppie and getting husbands."

Alison Hodge, Kappa Alpha Theta delegate to the Panhellenic, the sororities' equivalent to the Interfraternity Council, disagrees.

"It's not true," she says, although she does admit that "there could be a few here and there.

"The preppie look — it's a fashion," Hodge claims that people will follow the style worn by their friends, Greek or not.

Hallquist adds, "Yeah, it's not like we pull out GQ (Gentlemen's Quarterly magazine) and say 'uh, you don't look right.'"

As for the "Airhead" reference, Hallquist uses grade point averages for each sorority from Spring

Term, '81 as a defense. According to Panhellenic statistics, the Sigma Kappa and Delta Delta Delta girls maintained 2.9 GPAs. The Alpha Phis were not far behind with a 2.8 GPA.

"That's pretty good," Hallquist says.

Robert Bowlin, dean of students, says rivalry between Greeks and the rest of campus will never disappear.

"People get a certain amount of distaste from (groups) that are selective," he says.

"It's not necessarily unhealthy," he adds.

Bowlin puts down the common view that everybody in the Greek system is rich.

"If we really take a look at our houses, we'll find a lot of students that are self-supportive."

"People have to look beyond stereotypes," Bowlin says. "Too much is based on stereotypes and that I regret."

Despite the rivalry, a Greek renaissance is sweeping the nation's colleges and universities.

According to the National Interfraternity Council, national enlistment has gone from 139,838 in 1971 to 250,000 in 1981. Sororities have experienced the same boom.

Perhaps the most ironic example of the Greek system resurrection is at the University of California at Berkeley, the hot seat of the sixties radical movement. Rolling Stone magazine reports that 630 girls went through rush.

Here at the University, the trend is no different. Currently, 1800 to 2,000 fraternity and sorority members roam the campus, 12 percent of the student body.

Hallquist estimates that 389 men went through fraternity rush this year. Debbie Hughes, Panhellenic Rush Chairman, says 390 women rushed this fall.

In 1971, only 188 women went through rush.

Hallquist is unsure about what caused the Greek revival.

"It looks like there's a cycle," he says.

"There's no simple answer. If we knew there was a simple answer, we would emphasize it in our rush programs.

"A lot of people here are the generation after Vietnam," when fraternities and sororities were an endangered species. In the early 1960s, 21 fraternities existed on campus. After 1967, the number dropped to 10.

The Greek system gives students another "small group living option," Bowlin says, especially at a university where "some can get lost" without an identifiable support group.

GPA performs decisive role in admissions

By PHIL LEMMAN
Of the Emerald

A long-standing University institution — the grade point average — is back in the limelight.

As entrance into departments and schools — and even the University itself — becomes more competitive, the GPA is taking over as a standard for admissions.

"Grades will become increasingly important as crowded programs seek ways to reduce numbers of students," says Marliss Strange, associate director for academic advising and student services.

In addition to providing entrance into professional schools, a student's GPA is used to determine eligibility for scholarships, honor societies, and entry into post-baccalaureate studies such as law or medical school.

Studying harder is a way to possibly raise one's GPA. Taking easy courses is another.

"There are relatively few required courses for a major, so students can get out of the ones they can't handle," says Clarethel Kahananui, acting vice-chancellor for academic affairs.

Whichever method students choose, their GPA will be a deciding factor in what school, program or honor society they can enter and what scholarships they can receive.

Merit scholarships are awarded using several criteria, including GPA, says Herbert Wisner, a scholarship committee member. Committee members evaluate each applicant using GPA, written recommendations and a personal statement by the applicant.

A student's GPA is "the best single measure, although not infallible," Wisner says. Any weighting mechanism used to distinguish grades from different academic programs — that is, programs that award a higher percentage of As and Bs — is up to the individual committee member, he says.

Honor societies vary the importance given GPAs as entry standards. For some — like freshman honor societies Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma — GPA is the sole criteria for eligibility.

Others use GPA as a starting point, considering community service, leadership and other factors as well.

Admissions officers for the University law school and the Oregon Health Sciences University both say GPA is a major consideration for entry.

The law school uses the GPA along with LSAT test scores as primary criteria for admissions, according to Marilyn Bradetich, law school admissions officer. Bradetich says admissions officers don't look at individual courses on a transcript.

Merit scholarships and honor societies generally are not significant factors in determining entry, except in close decisions between applicants, she says.

Dick Speight, admissions director at the Oregon Health Sciences University, says GPA is the only criteria for admission. There is no weighting mechanism used, he says — "an A is an A."

At the University, deans and faculty in the arts and sciences college are moving to start or raise GPA admission requirements in an attempt to slow the influx of students into their programs.

Two programs in the college, computer science and telecommunications, have started GPA entrance requirements effective this fall.

Joseph Hynes, the associate dean for undergraduate studies in the college, says no department wants to limit entry, but a lack of money to expand the popular programs has led to an emphasis on quality over quantity.

"We are not going to give up quality for numbers. We are going to teach the best students first," Hynes said.

The business school started with a 2.5 minimum GPA requirement in 1978, but raised it this year to 2.75. Don Lytle, undergraduate program director, says administrators already are considering further increases to limit steady enrollment increases in business classes.

A similar situation exists in the journalism school. Journalism Prof. Ken Metzler says the school's enrollment is increasing beyond the faculty's ability to handle it.

As a result the journalism school is considering ways to reduce enrollment, including raising the present 2.5 GPA entry requirement, he says.