



Lynn Pinkney

have been dropped because the gay member graduated and moved away.

"Everyone's extremely touchy about this topic for obvious reasons," Contreras says. "It's a very volatile issue and there's a great deal of looking over shoulders."

Still, the incident has forced new questions to surface. People within the Greek system and, even more importantly, within the University administration are now re-evaluating their policies.

"This has been misidentified as a Greek issue," he says. "The issue should be, 'How broad is the University's policy — what's covered and what's not?'" he says.

The policy, he says, does not cover certain groups that exist independently of the University. But those groups are not well-defined.

"There are several aspects of campus life that are in a gray area — ROTC, the Greeks, dorms, athletics — and it seems like you ought to know if you're protected in a given situation or not," Contreras says.

According to the Student Conduct Code, the University "affirms the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment."

But Contreras points out that housing is not mentioned with the exception of residence halls. He says the Greek system

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should have to comply with the conduct code, however, because Panhellenic and the IFC, the executive bodies of the Greek system, receive money from the Incidental Fees Committee, and its advisers are paid partly with University funds.

Even though the Greek system meets these qualifications, it doesn't necessarily fall under the University's jurisdiction, says Gerry Moseley, associate provost for student affairs.

"There are linkages, but they are vague where social activities are concerned," Moseley adds. He says that administrators are not landlords to fraternities and sororities but that they do work with national chapter leaders.

The University is looking for diversity in all of its student housing options because it promotes good group living, Moseley says.

He claims the school's philosophy is that organizations whose members are identical would not be reasonable. "It is just as we'd feel about an all-blond fraternity or an all blue-eyed fraternity — it shouldn't be monolithic," Moseley says.

He says he does sympathize with the difficulty of placing homosexuals in a group living environment, however.

"Sometimes people feel that there is a strain on anyone who feels differently," Moseley says. "And maybe there is discrimination in the sense that you give up some rights when you join a living organization."

He says the viability of the organization is "at risk" when it accepts gay members. "The organization has to preserve itself," Moseley says.

Regarding the complaint, Moseley feels the best thing is to let the fraternity deal with it.

"Since we haven't heard anything more about it, it could be that the fraternity system has solved the problem itself," he says.

"And if it's a victimless crime, I'm not sure I'd want to write a law prohibiting it." Instead, the incident should be dealt with on a more educational level, he adds.

On the other hand, some feel discrimination against gays is more than an educational issue.

"It seems clear to me that a group like the IFC (Interfraternity Council)... cannot discriminate because of the University's policy," says Lynn Pinkney, co-director of the campus Gay and Lesbian Alliance.

"University requirements should be extended to apply to the Greek system. GALA is required to comply with non-discrimination policies, and the Greek system is connected also in the sense that they are recognized student groups. I don't see why they shouldn't comply as well," she says.

Mitch Vance, Interfraternity Council president, disagrees. He says the Greek system works best when it's left to work out its own problems.

"We are encouraged by the University to be self-governing, and it's an effective method," Vance says.

Only rarely would the University have to step in; most of the time problems that involve two or more students go

to the IFC tribunal system, which can impose fines, require community service or eliminate a house from rush, he says.

Regarding last spring's alleged discrimination incident, Vance says other fraternity presidents are aware of the situation and are trying to learn from it.

"The University is happy to see us approach this as an educational issue, and I think it's definitely time for the Greek system to address this issue... whether the incident actually happened or not," Vance says.

"Like any living organization, the Greek system is becoming more aware of homosexuality because situations like that (of last spring) can and probably do arise," Vance says.

"I think other living organizations need to discuss it, also. There's starting to be some concern in this area," he adds.

Although he feels gay discrimination should be dealt with, Vance sees little he can do to legislate against it.

"It's not my office's responsibility or right to suggest a procedure to change the situation," Vance says. "At this point, there are no statutes or constitutional points that address this issue, and there's nothing I know of in a fraternity's constitution to deal with this."

And there is no blanket policy that could be instigated, Vance says, because there are such strong opinions on the issue. "It's impossible to expect everyone to adopt a policy towards homosexuality," Vance says.

At the same time, a house would need to "look at itself very closely" if it disaffiliated a member because of sexual preference, he says. "Disaffilia-

tion is a necessary tool, but it's very uncommon, and it's usually very justified, in my experience."

Instead of disaffiliating a member for being gay, a fraternity could ask the member to live outside the house but continue to be active in the chapter, Vance suggests.

"It (having gay members) is something that threatens the unity and brotherhood of a fraternity," he says. "There's a possibility that a homosexual could do some damage to the closeness in a house."

GALA's Pinkney, on the other hand, thinks fraternities and sororities are losing out by not including gay people.

"I feel they (Greek houses) are a wonderful educational opportunity, and I think it's really sad that gay and lesbian people have to choose between that experience and being themselves," Pinkney says.

So the question remains: Is the Greek system too independent?

All fraternities are given a degree of autonomy, Delta Sigma Phi's James says, as long as they do not violate their own constitution or federal law.

"But right now there is no federal law that prohibits discrimination against gays and nothing that speaks to the fact of sexual preference," he says.

Until there is, this issue may not be solved.



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