Pledges left waiting for bids after sorority rush

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Three hundred pledges received bids to join 11 sorority chapters Saturday night, said Shelly Sutherland, greek adviser for the University. However, pledges were forced to wait on the on the lawn near Gerlinger Hall for two hours before receiving their bids. In past years, pledges received their bids upon arrival.

"It was frustrating," said one freshman pledge, she pledge did not want to reveal her name or the name of her house for fear of shaming her chapter. "I can tell you that 200 other girls felt the same way. You're already nervous as it is, and now we had to wait."

During rush week, pledges choose the house they want to join by scratching in their picks on a Scantron-type sheet. A computer matches the rushees' picks with the houses' choice of pledges.

Rumors were circulating that some pledges did not receive bids that night or received two bids. Pledges are supposed to receive only one bid from one house. Another rumor said that a computer malfunction was to blame for the delay. Sutherland dismisses all of those rumors.

"Everybody there got a bid," she said. "We delayed giving the bids for two hours because we wanted to make sure we got it right." Sutherland explained that she and the rest of the sorority executive council did not have enough time to double-check the accuracy of the computer bid lists.

Each sorority received its bid list at 3:30 p.m. Saturday, after the football game. The pledges were supposed to receive their invitations at 5 p.m. Sutherland and executive council members had only an hour and a half to make sure the computer bid lists were correct.

"Several sororities called in to ask why they didn't get a certain pledge. They wanted to make sure it wasn't a computer mistake," Sutherland said. She and executive council members had to pore over the lists and confirm that a pledge did get the correct bid.

"Normally, we would've given the lists to the chapters earlier so they could have time to question things," Suthertland said. "The rush chairs didn't want the bid lists given early because they didn't want the pledges hearing about the bids early at the football game."

Sutherland blamed much of the confusion on the football game. She said sorority members and pledges were late getting back from the game. When asked why the bid lists were given on the same day as a football game rather than on a Sunday as in years past, Sutherland said that the sororities wanted to use the following Sunday to get ready for classes.

"It's part of our effort to concentrate on academic advising this year," she said.

"What is academic advising?" another pledge said when asked if the sororities had received any during rush week. "The only people who got academic advising were the 30 girls who did not register for classes out of the 300 (pledges). I don't remember me or anyone I knew getting any academic advising because we were so busy visiting each of the houses and going to parties."

A third pledge pointed out that the Panhellenic Council seemed disorganized. Sutherland said that the disorganization was merely a perception based on the fact that pledges and rush chairwomen may have been less familiar with "new regulations" enacted by the executive council over the past year. These new regulations focused on spending less, academic advising and more communication between the pledges and the sorority members.

Laurel Parrish, rush chairwoman for the Panhellenic Council, refused to comment on what happened Saturday night. "Everything was correct. We were making sure everything was correct. I will not be giving any more details. My opinions will not be given to the press," she said.

CREDIT

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Kent got the information from the University Ford credit report.

In just a few months, the card was at its credit limit and the bank began to request overdue payment.

By January 1994, the bank wrote the debt off as a loss and flagged Kent's account as a risk, Kent said.

"The bank didn't even try to notify me," he said.

In May, Kent began gathering the information himself by requesting a copy of his credit report from Equifax, a credit reporting agency in Atlanta. The agency allows one free report to anyone who asks, which is required by law.

Kent said he filed repeated applications for his free report but after 10 weeks, he received nothing.

The *Emerald* tried contacting Equifax for comment but only reached repeated voice mail boxes.

"Their voice mail system is cavernous," Kent said. "It's just a clearing house and they're trying only to sell you their services."

In July, Kent contacted TRW Credit Services, another reporting agency, for the credit information.

After four weeks he received the report, but it recorded activity only from January 1994 and not the earlier period that he needed.

To prosecute, Kent needs the amount, the bank name and the perpetrator's name — information the salesman wouldn't give him. Without it, police won't investigate the case.

"Basically, I'm dead in the water because it takes so much time," Kent said, who was hired last August by Kaufer Miller Communications in Seattle, a public relations firm. "I've got a new job that I need to focus on, not this."

Other options for Kent could include hiring a private investigator or subscribing to one of the credit reporting services, both of which could cost hundreds of dollars.

That's money Kent said he doesn't have.

Kent plans on contacting the University Alumni Association for help next.

This isn't the first time Kent's had trouble with mail directed to his old fraternity address.

Last year, he received a bill for eight compact discs from a music club he didn't join.

But Kent, who won't name the fraternity, doesn't blame the house.

"I'm not going to hurt a brother," he said. "For all I know, someone could be running a scam through the fraternity."

If anyone deserves blame its the bank that sent the application, Kent said.

"If they think you're such a great credit risk to send you an application, why don't they bother to look up your correct address?" he said.

Kent is again receiving consumer credit for small purchases but still fears how his poor credit rating will affect him in the future, if he gets married and wants to buy a house.

But his biggest worry is who will harm him next.

"You can lock your doors and bar your windows, but how do you protect your identity?" he said. "(Fraud) can ruin you."

If anyone wants to report information on this case, contact Detective Jim Green of the Eugene Police Department's fraud unit at 341-5837.