

Several Greek houses select service, sobriety

■ While a few fraternities have signed on to go dry, some refuse to hop on the wagon

By Kara Cogswell
Oregon Daily Emerald

When national fraternity leaders began committing to Select 2000 in 1996, they promised it would bring the Greek system back to the ideals it was founded on — community service, leadership, friendship and academic achievement.

But now, five years after Select 2000 began, some say it does not seem to have caught on the way fraternity leaders believed it would. And three years after the program came to the University, some students within the Greek system still have their doubts about its effectiveness.

To join Select 2000, fraternity and sorority members sign a contract signifying their commitment to Greek ideals. But what the program has become best known for — and why it is often debated — is its push to end drinking in Greek houses. All houses that join Select 2000 are required to keep chapter property substance-free.

Founders of the program believed substance-free housing would combat recurrent problems within the Greek system, such as binge drinking, sexual harassment, and low academic achievement, said Sean Thomas, an intern with the North American Interfraternity Council.

Many thought the program would catch on quickly. In a 1997 New York Times article, national fraternity leaders said substance-free housing would soon become the "norm" at fraternities across America.

But today, only nine universities nationwide have substance-free, or "dry," housing in all fraternities and sororities.

And at the University, nine sororities and five of the 15 fraternities have pledged to be dry as part of their commitment to Select 2000.

Select 2000 came to the University in November 1997. As an incentive to join, the University offered participating chapters a one-time bonus of \$3,000 to be used for house improvement, former University Greek Adviser Michael McRee said. In addition, any new chapters that come to the University are required to join Select 2000.

Members of these "dry" houses may not have any alcohol on chapter property — even if they're 21 years old. Alcohol is permitted at functions — gatherings between fraternities and sororities — but only if the event is held off-campus and alcohol is served by a third-party vendor. This reduces the chapter's liability by holding the third party responsible for checking identification of students before serving them alcohol, McRee said.

While sororities have always been dry, Select 2000 has had a significant impact on all members of the Greek system, former Delta Gamma president Jennifer Laudin said. Since the program began, she said, fraternities have become cleaner and safer. And although she and her friends sometimes reminisce about the "glory days" before Select 2000, she said it is just not fair to older students to be held liable for underage members who choose to drink.

"I definitely think it's where the Greek system needs to move," she said.

Members of the Panhellenic Council, which represents sororities, voted on behalf of their houses to join Select 2000. But among fraternities, where membership in the program is determined by a majority vote of individual house members, there has been

more dissent. At the University, 10 fraternities with houses have decided not to join Select 2000.

Often, McRee said, the reason members do not want to join is that they see the prohibition on drinking within the house as a violation of their rights. But, he said, it is the responsibility of fraternities to follow the law, and with a majority of the students living in fraternities underage, enforcement of the drinking age within the house is difficult.

"Fraternities have proven in the past that they have not been able to self-regulate," he said. "The root of all problems in fraternities and sororities are the differences between what they say they do, and what they actually do."

Keyon Maljai, president of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity, said he believes Select 2000 is a positive aspect of the Greek system. The absence of alcohol within his house has allowed members to focus more on academics and forming strong friendships, he said.

"The wet housing would be fun for a while," he said. "But I don't think I would get anything out of it."

Higher grades are one benefit of his house's decision to go dry, Delta Upsilon president Philip Benton said. Last year, the house members' cumulative grade point average was around a 2.5 or 2.6, he said. This year, the house average is about 2.9 — an increase he said is partly because of the more study-friendly atmosphere dry housing provides.

He added that the Select 2000 program is not about dividing the Greek system along "wet" and "dry" lines.

"Select 2000 should be seen as certain houses making a proactive stance toward improving their house and the Greek system as a whole," he said.

But not all members agree.



Adam Amato Emerald

Members of the Sigma Chi fraternity get their daily dose of basketball, one of the many alternatives to drinking encouraged since the chapter began participating in the Select 2000 program in May of last year.

Chad Parker, president of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity, said members of the community often view wet houses in a more negative light than dry houses.

Although his house is actively involved with community service projects, people often discount their achievements simply because they allow drinking within the house, he said.

He said he opposes going dry on the principle that it is an infringement of student rights, and added that the incentive money offered was a poor substitute for the loss of freedom.

"Is money worth giving up any kind of right?" he asked. "Throwing petty money at us isn't going to impress me, and it isn't going to impress my house."

Logan Archambault, a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity and a former IFC representative, said he didn't see any reason to join Select 2000 because his house already practices the principles of brotherhood and service outlined in the program.

"The removal of alcohol was the only thing we don't already do," he

said, adding that the decision to drink should be one made by students on an individual basis, not by the chapter.

Too much emphasis has been placed on the alcohol-related aspects of the program, Theta Chi president Jeremy Hull said, and not enough consideration has been given to the program's other goals. Since his house joined Select 2000, he has noticed flaws in the program — such as the lack of a transition period for a house to go dry, and the absence of an adequate designated driver system for members who drink at an off-campus site before attending functions.

But, he added, the switch to substance-free housing has been a positive change for his house, and it is one he believes all fraternities should make. He warned chapters that have not gone dry that they will be held liable if underage members drink. Citing alcohol-related accidents at Greek houses on other campuses as an example of this, he said it is only a matter of time before a similar inci-

BONdeal: unlimited financial aid

Your ID card now gets you **EXTRA 10% SAVINGS EVERY TUESDAY IN MAY** on practically every purchase. Hey, it's tough making ends meet at school. But with our help, the only things you'll need to worry about are your grades.

Valid on Tuesdays only during May 2001 with active University of Oregon student or employee identification card. Bon Marché employees and their relatives are not eligible. Excludes purchase of merchandise certificates, gift cards, fine jewelry, fragrances, cosmetics, furniture, mattresses and area rugs. Cannot be combined with any other discount offer.



The **BONMARCHÉ**
YOUR NORTHWEST DEPARTMENT STORE

for life, for you