

CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY

1850 Emerald Street

346-4468

<http://www.newmanctr-uoregon.org>

Mass Schedule: Sat 5:00pm & Sun 9:00am, 11:00am, 7:30pm

Student Mass: Wednesday Nights 9:00pm

Music Ministry
Social Justice
Service Projects
Bible Studies
Prayer
Retreats
Leadership Opportunities

Alternative Spring Break Trip
Student Masses
Volunteer with Kids & Teens
Hikes, BBQ's, Bike Rides
Friendships and Fun
Library and Study Hours

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Courtesy of University Archives

Members of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority pose for a group photograph circa 1931. The chapter closed in 1969, and the house has since become the Lorax Manor co-operative living environment, located on Alder Street.

Campus Greek Life is rich in history

■ Membership in fraternities and sororities at the University reached its high in the 1950s

By Kara Cogswell
Oregon Daily Emerald

As the University celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, fraternity and sorority members will celebrate more than 100 years of Greek history at the University, as well.

The Greek system began at the University with the opening of Sigma Nu fraternity in 1900. The fraternity still exists at its original location near 11th Avenue and Alder Street. Kappa Sigma, the second-oldest University fraternity, opened its chapter next door to Sigma Nu in 1904.

Not long after, Gamma Phi Beta, the first University sorority, was established in 1908. Members of the sorority still live in the original chapter house on Hilyard Street today.

The Greek system grew quickly. By 1921, there were 18 fraternities and 10 sororities at the University.

Aileen Lee has worked with students involved in the Greek system since 1951 in several University offices. She helped to create the first paid Greek Life adviser position. Now retired, she still volunteers in the Greek Life Office.

Lee, who has spent time researching the Greek system, said it is difficult to know how many students were involved in the Greek system during the early 1900s because few records were kept.

But early issues of the Emerald indicate that fraternities and sororities dominated social life on campus. In a 1916 student activities column in the paper, for example, little else is reported besides sorority dinner guests and fraternity socials.

The most important day of the first semester was reported to be "frosh open house," when sororities would open their doors and fraternity men would file into each one and introduce themselves to every woman in the house.

Through the 1920s and 1930s, several more national fraternity and sorority chapters, including Alpha Chi Omega, Theta Chi and Delta Upsilon, were founded at the University.

During World War II, with many men gone to fight in the war, many fraternity houses were turned into boarding houses for women. Sororities on campus supported the war effort by raising money to buy war stamps, volunteering at the local Red Cross and sending Christmas presents to American soldiers, according to Emerald articles.

After the war, the Greek system thrived at the University. According to the University Alumni Association, more students were members of fraternities and sororities during the 1950s and 1960s than ever before or since.

Lee, who was a member of the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority from 1951 to 1953, has fond memories of sorority social events and an annual Homecoming parade with floats built by fraternities and sororities. Fraternity and sorority members were active on campus, she said, and many student body presidents during the 1950s were involved in the Greek system.

In the fall of 1956, the Emerald reported that of a total student body of about 5,000, about 600 freshmen pledged to join Greek chapters. In the fall of 2001, of an estimated total student body of 18,600, 404 freshmen pledged.

Many of the University's Greek houses were built or renovated during the 1950s and early '60s, including the Kappa Sigma fraternity house.

The new house, which members of the fraternity still live in today, was built facing Alder Street rather than 11th Street, in hopes of softening the fraternity's rivalry with neighbor Sigma Nu.

The rivalry between the two houses reportedly dated back to Prohibition times, when members of the Kappa Sigma fraternity built

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International Students Association

Located in suite 206, EMU

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