

The Greek System and the Influence of Cal Poly's Students Towards Campus Administration

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Abstract

This paper will portray how Cal Poly's Greek life systems as well as the regular student body have influenced the university's present policies of alcohol and other misconducts. It will examine the history of some fraternities who have received serious punishments due to their actions which resulted in the expulsion and dissolution of their organizations. However, in efforts to maintain stable relationships with Cal Poly and the residents of San Luis Obispo, it is common for fraternities and sororities to participate in local and national philanthropic services in order to maintain stable relationships through philanthropy. Since the 1970s, fraternities as well as Cal Poly have made attempts to create a society which foster a positive impact for its students.

Key Words

Fraternity, Hazing, Dissolution, Alcohol Policies, University/Campus Administration

Introduction

The history of the Greek-based society is synonymous with the progress and establishment of American universities. As a result, fraternities and sororities have become an identity for many young Americans within the United States. Founded in the College of William and Mary in 1750, the “Flat Hat Club” was the precursor to the modern fraternity and aided in the establishment of Phi Beta Kappa in 1776.¹ Phi Beta Kappa, an honor society for liberal arts and sciences majors, is known as the first fraternal organization in the U.S. and was organized in the very same college as the Flat Hat Club.

Though the establishments of a fraternity, sorority, or an honor society lie in the ideals of camaraderie, the betterment of individuals, and a rise of philanthropic activities, the negative portrayals and common stereotypes of Greek organizations have influenced many to dismiss these purposes. Within its more recent history, fraternities have been commonly associated with the negative traditions of alcohol abuse, hazing, and acts of sexual assault that have traumatized and taken the lives of many university students across America. This may be unfair, however, since practices such as hazing, alcohol use, and other activities are not limited to members of Greek organizations, but are instead a tradition among students of an American university. Despite the prejudices of those associated with a Greek-lettered community, many still belong to these groups. According to the Dean of Students, Cal Poly holds around 4,000 students within the Greek community accounting to roughly 20% of the student population.² As a result, the influence fraternities/sororities hold in San Luis Obispo is significant and continuously changes the policies and traditions of the university. As Greek life and the traditions of the American university continues to breathe within Cal Poly, this paper will attempt to compare the

¹"The Flat Hat Club," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1917): 161.

² Dean of Students, “Recruitment”, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, 2018, <https://deanofstudents.calpoly.edu/content/greek/recruitment/index> , accessed February 5, 2018.

consequences that have arisen due to the actions of these communities and therefore discover how they have consequently influenced the direction and establishment of Cal Poly's alcohol programs and policies.

The Negatives

Whether negative or positive, stigmas exist within most social and political organizations on an American college campus. Unfortunately, it is by no means a surprise to hear about the associations of hazing and sexual assault within the Greek community. As a response to these issues and in order to ensure the safety of their students as well as their public image, universities are constantly working to prevent such misconducts from happening in the future. Within the history of Greek life in Cal Poly there have been numerous reports about fraternities and their disturbing involvements with alcohol, sexual misconduct, and hazing. As a consequence of these infractions, fraternities have been dissolved or disaffiliated through the orders of Cal Poly and their national fraternities.

On the morning of December 2, 2008, Carson Starkey, a freshman and new member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity, passed away from respiratory arrest due to acute ethanol toxicity, more commonly known as alcohol poisoning. Before the night of his death, SAE pledges were required to consume full contents of their bags and a bottle of 151 proof Everclear within a period of one and a half hours. After this event, Carson Starkey was later found unresponsive with a blood alcohol content of .39 to .44 and taken to the Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.³ In a response to the tragic news of Carson Starkey's death, Cal Poly's administrative staff jumped to investigate how such an

³ Matt Fountain, "UPDATE: Four SAE Members Charged in Hazing Death," *Mustang News*, 22 May 2009, mustangnews.net/updated-story-four-sae-members-charged-in-hazing-death/, accessed March 6, 2018.

accident had occurred. In a statement from Warren Baker, “The university has investigated more than a dozen students who may have been involved in this tragic event... As a result of those investigations and as an outcome of the campus disciplinary process, nine students have either permanently withdrawn from Cal Poly or been suspended for at least one academic year.”⁴ In addition to these punishments, four Cal Poly students were arrested on charges of felony violation due to “hazing causing death...” and misdemeanors of “permitting a minor to consume alcohol.”⁵ Their bails were set at \$50,000 for felony charges and \$10,000 due to the misdemeanors.

This incident triggered Cal Poly’s administration to enforce and change Greek life policies. In 2011, new party registration and alcohol policies were implemented as well as health and awareness programs. This disastrous incident had initiated the fundamental steps towards a safer environment for university students. Additionally, freshmen were no longer able to rush for a fraternity during their first quarter of the school year, a policy later deferred in 2013 in an effort to prevent uninformed freshmen from creating alcohol and hazing mistakes. In order to prevent future tragedies, the university had also worked with Starkey’s family to incorporate Aware, Awake, Alive, an educational program fostered towards teaching students about the dangers of alcohol abuse and its methods of prevention.⁶

Unfortunately, incidents such as these are not all too uncommon. As of January 19, 2018, the fraternity Delta Tau Delta (DTD) of the Kappa Delta chapter was officially dissolved. During the past year, Delta Tau Delta’s relationship with Cal Poly had been on a decline. The fraternity

⁴ Fountain “UPDATE: Four SAE Members Charged.”

⁵ Fountain “UPDATE: Four SAE Members Charged.”

⁶ Stacia Momburg, “Cal Poly Revokes Recognition of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity Chapter After Alcohol-Related Violations,” 9 August 2011, Public Affairs Office, Press Releases, Kennedy Library Online Archive, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4284&context=pao_pr.

had been on probation due to violations of alcohol, party registration, and hazing policies. In addition to these infractions, a member was removed from the fraternity due to an accusation of at least seven sexual assaults. Constant offenses of bylaws and regulations have concerned the national organization of Delta Tau Delta to conduct a formal investigation of its Cal Poly chapter. This membership review, organized by the nationals, had removed all but 15 individuals from the fraternity ultimately leading to its dissolution.⁷ A Facebook post by the official Delta Tau Delta fraternity of Cal Poly stated, “We regret to inform... the Kappa Delta Chapter of Delta Tau Delta has been dissolved. This decision was made by the members of the chapter following a membership review the past Sunday in which we felt that our national organization showed a pattern of unfair and disrespectful behavior towards our members.”⁸ Revoking a national charter from a chapter is a problematic and difficult decision for the national headquarters of a fraternity; however, repeated violations of these policies illustrated that Cal Poly’s DTD chapter had been a liability and danger for the public image of a national fraternity and the securities of the Cal Poly students.

Reports on the negative implications of Greek life have worried many about the dangers these students partake in. Works such as “*Whales Tales, Dog Piles, and Beer Goggles: An Ethnographic Case Study of Fraternity Life*,” a 1995 article by Robert A. Rhoads, discuss the prevailing issues related to the social and criminal aspects of the fraternal organization.⁹ By observing fraternity members who had committed hazing and sexual assaults, researchers and writers attempt to determine if these incidents were caused due to the pressures of their

⁷Gina Randazzo Rachel Marquardt, “DTD Dissolves Chapter Following Multiple Probations, Removal of Member and National Organization Review,” *Mustang News*, 4 Feb. 2018, mustangnews.net/dtd-dissolves-chapter-following-multiple-probations-removal-member-national-organization-review-2/, accessed March 6, 2018.

⁸ Cal Poly Delts, Facebook Post, 21 January 2018.

⁹ Robert A. Rhoads, "Whales Tales, Dog Piles, and Beer Goggles: An Ethnographic Case Study of Fraternity Life," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1995).

environment, or if a fraternity simply reinforces these behavioral tendencies and daunting actions.

Of course, it is unfair to establish hazing and sexual misconducts towards a singular organization within the American university. The findings of a national study of student hazing called "*Hazing in View: College Students at Risk*" by Dr. Elizabeth J. Allan and Dr. Mary Madden argues that the practices of hazing are not exclusive within Greek life but instead an unfortunate tradition within the lives of college students. In order to clear any vagueness or ambiguity of the term, hazing is "any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule, and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate."¹⁰

By conducting national studies across over 50 universities, both researchers have concluded that hazing occurs regularly across a wide arrange of student organizations, extending beyond athletic teams or Greek-lettered establishments.¹¹ In fact, within their research, the National Study of Student Hazing noticed that over half of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experienced some form of hazing and among these numbers around 90% of the students have not recognized that they have been hazed.¹² Among hazing practices, alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, and sleep deprivation have been the most common acts to have been reported in these interviews and surveys. Stereotypes have often shaped hazing as the actions performed solely by those in an athletic team or Greek environment; however, it is seen within this study that these actions are conducted by many different organizations within a

¹⁰ "What Hazing Looks Like." *Hazing Prevention*, hazingprevention.org/home/hazing/facts-what-hazing-looks-like/.

¹¹ Elizabeth J. Allan and Mary Madden, "*Hazing in View: College Students at Risk*", 11 March 2008, University of Maine, College of Education and Human Development.

¹² Allan and Madden, "*Hazing in View*."

university. It is concerning that many do not seem to understand what the definition of hazing means and eventually dismiss these behaviors as simple pranks or harmless actions, ultimately resulting in the endangerment for the health and safety of its involuntary participants. Hazing is tightly associated with the culture of the American university participated in Greek organizations, athletics, and other student associations. As mentioned, Cal Poly has actively counteracted such hazing and alcohol incidents by implementing new policies and regulations that have periodically become stricter. However, despite the numerous policies campus administration may force down upon their students, it is also upon the students to understand the importance of anti-hazing agendas and act against the dangerous relationship between hazing and alcohol use.

Precedenting Policies and Its Underlying Intentions

During the decade of the 1970s, Cal Poly had an aim to prevent the possibilities of alcohol abuse among their students. In an attempt to remove one of the “worst” drugs in America, the university made extensive efforts to apply a system of alcohol education and awareness programs. The daunting perceptions and stigmas around alcohol use and college students fostered the introduction of much stricter regulations.

Alcohol use was widely considered to have been a negative problem within the nation. In a 1973 letter by the Cal Poly President Robert E. Kennedy to U.S. Senator Alan Cranston, Kennedy states “The drug epidemic in this nation is a deadly serious matter... As you are aware, I’m certain leading researchers in the drug abuse filed continue to name alcohol as the number one drug abuse problem in the nation... [and] we should not ignore the problem we have with

alcohol.”¹³ In response to the poor perceptions of alcohol abuse within college campuses, Robert E. Kennedy and the deans of Cal Poly established an alcohol education program.¹⁴ The purposes of such a program were simple and clear, to encourage responsible decision-making when using a potentially dangerous drug.¹⁵ Although a university may implement and establish certain policies, it is essentially useless without the proper application of such programs towards its intended students. If Cal Poly were to change their policies, then this change would have to be an opportunity to explain their goals of alcohol consumption through educational seminars and events. In collaboration with the Health Center and the Alcohol Abuse Center of San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly strived to provide their students with workshops, media campaigns, educational materials, and RA training to publicize their goals.¹⁶ As a result, behavioral changes within fraternities, sororities, and students were of paramount importance in order to eliminate the stigmas and peer pressures involved with alcohol. Cal Poly was mindful of the lack of alcohol awareness within their communities and acted in order to establish a safer environment for their students.

To avoid the consequences surrounding alcoholism, Cal Poly decided to implement a “dry campus”, resulting in the restriction of alcohol consumption within the grounds of the university. Although the school recognized that prohibition was not the solution to alcohol abuse, they incorporated such a decision for several reasons. In the Alcohol Committee Report of 1973, the sale of alcohol within campus was believed as, “discriminatory in that some, could not

¹³ Robert E. Kennedy, Letter to the Honorable Alan Cranston, 29 August 1973, General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

¹⁴ Robert E. Kennedy, “Alcohol Education Program”, Letter to All School Deans, 27 September 1973, General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

¹⁵ Jim Nash, “To Concerned Community Businesses and Individuals”, 27 April 1979, General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

¹⁶ “Suggestions for Policy and Educational Approaches to Alcohol on Campus”. General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

legally partake... and a deterrent to the educational process if education is viewed as an interaction between set and setting, in that alcohol allows the set to become anesthetized to the setting, and therefore less able to react to it.”¹⁷ The emergence of these policies and the San Luis Obispo’s County Code, which stated “Every person who possesses, consumes, sells, gives, or delivers to any other person, any alcoholic beverage in or on any public schoolhouse or any of the grounds thereof is guilty as a misdemeanor”, influenced Cal Poly’s decision to strictly outlaw the consumption and sale of alcohol on campus.¹⁸ At last, the university enacted a provision which stated, “Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages on the campus is prohibited. Exception to this rule may be granted by the President or his designee to allow the service (nonesale) of alcoholic beverages under established guidelines...”¹⁹

Educating Cal Poly’s population was not only for the health and safety of the school’s students but also for a positive national image as well. Daunting stories of a fraternity’s involvement with hazing and alcohol abuse threatens the reputation of a school and results in the downfall of applicants within the upcoming academic years. In addition to the fear of negative publicity, Cal Poly drafted letters in order to retain alumni donations and other sponsorships for the school. As a precaution against leaving donators, Cal Poly issued a letter to their supporters to inform them of the establishment and launchings of their Alcohol Education Program, “The purpose of this letter is to introduce you to Cal Poly’s Alcohol Education Program and hopefully to gain your support... You or the business you represent can help in several ways: by advocating responsible drinking to patrons and friends; [and] donating funds and/or supplies for

¹⁷ Dean Chandler, “Alcohol Abuse Committee/ Progress Report December ‘73”, Letter to Billy Mounts, 5 December 1973, General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

¹⁸ Larry Wolf, Consumption of Alcohol on Campus, 6 October 1972, General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

¹⁹ Alcohol Policy. General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

training programs or workshops.”²⁰ The reputation of a university is essential to its successfulness of an area of higher education. By ensuring and educating their students of proper alcohol use, Cal Poly had worked in order to guarantee the safety of its students and also eliminate the potential risks of stories related to dangerous alcohol use, which would have undoubtedly caused backlash upon the support of future donors and fundraising events. Therefore, in order to establish a secure environment for student safety and monetary investment, alcohol policy was resolved as an utmost importance for the maintenance of Cal Poly’s programs and relations with the San Luis Obispo population.

The Policies of Today

The establishments of an administered Cal Poly Alcohol Education Program fostered the standards we see in modern alcohol policy. These regulations are still implemented within the campus, shown in school-sponsored centers such as PULSE, a program which educates and aids students to overcome alcohol abuse and addiction. Furthermore, some of the strictest components of alcohol and drug policies lie in University Housing. The Housing and Dining License Agreement states, “Possession, distribution, consumption, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, vaporized alcohol, or beverages advertised as nonalcoholic substitutes is prohibited as are containers which originally held any of the previously mentioned substances.”²¹ In order to prevent the hazards associated with inexperienced and ill-informed freshmen, Cal Poly has developed policies and programs to educate them about the potential risks of dangerous alcohol consumption and drug use. New and incoming students regularly take online programs

²⁰ Jim Nash, “To Concerned Community Businesses and Individuals”, 27 April 1979, General Administrative Affairs, Box 250, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

²¹ “Housing and Dining License Agreement,” California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, 2017-2018, <http://www.housing.calpoly.edu/content/university-housing-policies> , accessed March 4, 2018.

such as Alcohol Wise, a required online educational curriculum which helps students understand alcohol use and its consequences.²² Fraternities and Sororities must also participate in regular programs such as Aware, Awake, Alive and Hazing Prevention in order to ensure the understanding of such pressing issues within the cultures of Greek life.

There are no doubts that over time stricter policies are enforced through school administration and Greek student organizations, the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council. These groups regulate the procedures and standards of behavior imposed upon the Greek community in order to minimize any foreseeable risks. The committee in charge of Cal Poly's self-disciplining board of Greek life is the Fraternity and Sorority Judicial Council (FSJC), a panel of students intended to translate the bylaws of an IFC or Panhellenic organization and appropriate their laws in accordance to the standards of Cal Poly's regulations.²³ As a result of these policies, there are stern requisites a fraternity/sorority must undergo in order to carry out certain actions including one of the most dangerous, an off-campus party. As required by Cal Poly, Greek organizations must be able to orchestrate transportations to their events, a guest list with the appropriate names of those attending the event, risk management policies to ensure the presence of sober monitors, and many other standards labeled within the school's Party Registration requirements.²⁴ Failure to do abide by these rules results in infractions, which fraternities receive warnings, social suspensions, and sanctions in accordance with an investigation.²⁵ Such measures are not only necessary for the records of these events but also to ensure a safe environment for its participating members. Due to the prior reports of the

²² "Alcohol Abuse Programs and Resources", Student Affairs, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, 2018, <https://studentaffairs.calpoly.edu/content/alcohol>, accessed March 4, 2018.

²³ Dean of Students, IFC/PHA/USFC Judicial Council Manual, Greek Policies, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. https://deanofstudents.calpoly.edu/content/greek/info_resources/policies, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁴ Dean of Students, Party Registration Policy. Greek Policies, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. https://deanofstudents.calpoly.edu/content/greek/info_resources/policies, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁵ Party Registration Policy. https://deanofstudents.calpoly.edu/content/greek/info_resources/policies.

sexual assaults and alcohol abuse within the fraternities of Cal Poly, the school instigated to establish measures of a judicial system which appropriately punished fraternities in accordance to their violations.

The Activities of Cal Poly Greek Life

Although the negative perceptions of a fraternity/sorority are commonly advertised across American college campuses, it is important to understand the underlying foundations of an established Greek system. Greek communities have been developed around the desires to leave an impressive legacy for their successors. Efforts to achieve such a goal includes the participation in the community's services/philanthropies, pursuit of academic success, and achievements to positively impact their university. Essentially, each fraternity/sorority chapter, including Cal Poly's, support designated philanthropies that they aid in. As a result, some of the primary focuses and pride of a fraternity and sorority lies within their abilities to raise money and support these philanthropies.

By striving to create a difference within their community, Greek life members are ideally bound to a standard of social service which includes participating in community service, and philanthropic events which raise money for a particular cause. According to the statistics presented by *Mustang News*, within the 2016 academic school year, Cal Poly's Greek organizations, which includes 36 Panhellenic (PHA), Interfraternity Council (IFC) and United Sorority and Fraternity Council (USFC) chapters had raised a total of over \$450,000.²⁶ Each event for an organization requires months of meticulous planning, and Greek members are involved to make a significant and positive difference within their communities. One of the most

²⁶ Megan Schellong, "Cal Poly Greek Life Raises More than \$450,000 for Philanthropies," *Mustang News*, 21 February 2017, mustangnews.net/cal-poly-greek-life-raises-450000-philanthropies/, accessed March 4, 2018.

successful annual philanthropy events, “Chi Omega’s Casino”, or “Chi O Casino”, establishes a mock casino for participants and hosts the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an organization dedicated to the fulfilling the “wishes” of children who are affected by life-threatening medical conditions. In a statement by Chi Omega, the sorority had successfully raised over \$40,000 for the foundation.²⁷ Other philanthropic events such as “Suicide Awareness Week” in association with the Transitions-Mental Health Associations by Sigma Pi, or “Dunk The UPD” held by Phi Sigma Kappa work for charity towards the St. Jude Medical, Special Olympics and Family Care Network.²⁸

In addition to the fundraisers and events held by Greeks, community service holds an important position within the requirements and dedications of the Greek community. Documentation of Cal Poly’s service records indicates that fraternities and sororities have collectively served 35,000 volunteer hours during the 2016 year. By translating these hours to the average salary of a non-profit employee within the 2015 year (\$23.56/hour), the Independent Sector estimates that over \$1,000,000 of service had been performed by the Greek community within San Luis Obispo.²⁹ Despite the negative perceptions of hazing, sexual assault, and other misconducts performed by Greek organizations, it is evident that the existence of these organizations contributes to lasting impacts by Greek organizations through positively sacrificing their efforts for the betterment of the community. Although many of the constructive actions of the Greek community have been overlooked, it is unfortunate that the actions of a few may ruin the image of an entire organization. Not only has the establishment of greater philanthropies

²⁷ Randazzo, Gina. “A Year in Greek Life Philanthropy.” *Mustang News*, 27 May 2016, mustangnews.net/year-greek-life-philanthropy/, accessed March 5, 2018.

²⁸ Jon. “The Only Time You Can Dunk a Cop and Get Away with It.” *Mustang News*, 10 Nov. 2014, mustangnews.net/the-only-time-you-can-dunk-a-cop-and-get-away-with-it/, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁹ Schellong, Megan. “Cal Poly Greek Life Raises More than \$450,000 for Philanthropies.” *Mustang News*, 21 Feb. 2017, mustangnews.net/cal-poly-greek-life-raises-450000-philanthropies/, accessed March 5, 2018.

have established a professional image for Cal Poly's reputation but also a stable relationship between the community of San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly's Greek organizations. The push for community involvement has created important impressions and understandings of what it entails to be a Greek member and student of Cal Poly.

Changes to the Greek System

Greek organizations had really begun to take initiative for better campus relations during the decade of the 1970s.³⁰ The development of the Interfraternity Council portrayed such a desire for this relationship. Randy Fisher, the president of the newly established Interfraternity Council, claimed that the unification of fraternities had been a difficult task since different chapters held fierce rivalries amongst one another.³¹ Prior to such a change, the dynamics within a fraternity had simply been apathetic to such an organization like the IFC. However, the recent introduction of newly reformed alcohol policies and programs had shown fraternities the essential benefits of allying and protecting themselves. As a result, negative tensions subsided and many worked together to develop this council.³² In the *Mustang Daily* Article, "Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?", writer Susan Rife challenges whether the introduction of the IFC would be able to initiate such reform within the Greek community, stating, "Members of these fraternities called Greeks, were pictured by many, not incorrectly, as beer-guzzling, hell-raising jocks out to have the best possible time at any expense"³³; however, Randy Fisher assured that "Fraternities and IFC are more responsible about their actions. The council has money for the first time and it is more

³⁰ Hertz, Tony, "Frats Put the Lid On Parties", *The Mustang Daily*, Vol. 40, No. 79, 6 April 1976, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

³¹ Rife, Susan, "Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?" *The Mustang Daily*, Vol. 40, No. 79, 6 April 1976, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

³² Susan Rife, "Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?" *The Mustang Daily*, Vol. 40, No. 79, 6 April 1976.

³³ Susan Rife, "Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?" *The Mustang Daily*, Vol. 40, No. 79, 6 April 1976.

financially responsible... the group was coded - given status on campus equivalent to any other council on campus.”³⁴ As “Spartans”, Greeks were commonly known as those who associated indulged in having fun and alcohol, Fiser said “fraternities were held responsible to the negative side of TGs although most of the trouble was not caused not by fraternity members but instead intoxicated party-goers... then when they caused trouble we had to take the blame.”³⁵ In response to the duties given to IFC by campus administration, fraternities have begun to establish change the direction they were headed. One of the leading goals of the IFC was the increase in involvement and participation in philanthropy within San Luis Obispo.³⁶ Additionally, IFC had also agreed to eliminate social events within fraternities, known as TGIFs which were “ended last year as part of a mutual agreement between the fraternities, the city of San Luis Obispo, and the administration of Cal Poly”.³⁷ Student opinions of fraternities were skeptical of such possible change; however, as shown today, the important changes IFC created through its establishments of a structural fraternal organization has aided the Greek community to develop an organization which would establish a more positive image executed by a decision to serve the San Luis Obispo community.

Still, IFC, as well as other Greek organizations take extensive efforts to maintain their relationships with Cal Poly and the San Luis Obispo community. Recently within the 2014 year, the fraternity and sorority communities within Cal Poly strove to maintain a beneficial status within a school by implementing a system of checks and balances holding other Greek organizations accountable for each other’s actions. Called the Standards of Excellence, this

³⁴ Susan Rife, “Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?” *The Mustang Daily*, Vol. 40, No. 79, 6 April 1976.

³⁵ Susan Rife, “Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?” *The Mustang Daily*, Vol. 40, No. 79, 6 April 1976.

³⁶ Fiser, Randy, “End of the Year Report, 1975-1976: Interfraternity Council”, 21 May 1976, ASI: Clubs, Committees, Organizations, Annual Reports and Activity Reports, Interfraternity Council, 1975-1978, Interhall Council 1967-1970, Box 53, folder 3, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

³⁷ Rife, “Can Greeks Lead a Spartan Life?”

program brings a structural assessment focused on the successful growth of individual chapters. Different sections within this program such as academics or campus/community relations are ranked according to their successes within each chapter.³⁸ By creating such a program, Greek organizations portray a desire to construct a better organization and maintain positive ties to those involved. As a result of Cal Poly's implementation of their new alcohol policy and regulations, fraternities have begun to take the route which prevented them facing negative consequences. The establishments of the IFC, Panhellenic Council, and JDFC have established a self-sustaining organization that is able to effectively control and regulate the actions of Greek organizations, championing for the establishment of safer regulations for which Greek organizations would follow.

Conclusion

The associations within a Greek-letter organization have a surrounding negative stigma. Incidents such as hazing, alcohol use, and sexual misconducts have garnered national attention of the prevailing issues concerned around fraternities and sororities. The labeling of alcohol as the "worst drug" in the 70s had worried Cal Poly about the possible risks associated with an uninformed youth and alcohol consumption. In order to avoid such detrimental issues from occurring, Cal Poly had taken action to establish new alcohol education programs and policies since the 1970s. Despite the enactment of such policies, the history of Cal Poly shows that such regulations are not absolute. Fraternities such as Delta Tau Delta and Sigma Alpha Epsilon failed to adhere to such rules and as a result, both the university and their respective national organizations have dissolved and disaffiliated these chapters. Through trial and error, policies

³⁸ Jon, "Greek Community Creates Standards of Excellence System to Evaluate Chapters," *Mustang News*, 20 November 2014, mustangnews.net/greek-community-creates-standards-of-excellence-system-to-evaluate-chapters/, accessed March 6, 2018.

and programs have been created by both members of the Greek community and campus administration to further minimize such accidents from occurring again. Not only does the establishment of an alcohol policy ensure a greater chance of student safety but also portrays a positive image Cal Poly seeks from the public. The underlying foundations of a Greek-letter organization still exist within Cal Poly. Fraternity and sorority members have been slowly adopting a different stigma through their goals of maintaining positive relationships and reputations throughout San Luis Obispo through their participation in philanthropy and community service. It is evident that fraternities and sororities have been establishing methods and organizations, such as the Interfraternity Council and Fraternity and Sorority Judicial Council, which Greek members have taken greater efforts to maintain a positive relationship with both the university and San Luis Obispo County. By establishing systems of checks and balances we can hopefully foresee a future when Cal Poly's fraternities end their history of sexual assault, hazing, and alcohol abuse.

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