

It's Greek to Me

Thinking about joining a sorority or fraternity next year? Now is a great time to research whether this college tradition is right for you.



Campus can feel mighty big when you first hit the scene. And whether your school has 80,000 students or 800, it's easy to feel lost in the crowd. As a result, students often seek ways to make campus feel smaller. One popular option is the Greek system—paid, invitation-only membership organizations that offer a number of social, philanthropic and leadership opportunities. But how do you know if fraternities or sororities are for you? Here are a few things to consider:

The Greek system can be a support system. "Research shows that members of fraternities and sororities, on average, have higher GPAs than students who do not join a Greek organization," says Sandy Grossman, International President (Grand Archon) of Phi Sigma Sigma.

You learn life skills. Judy Le, 19, a University of Massachusetts at Amherst (UMASS) student and member of Sigma Psi Zeta, credits her sorority with providing a number of new skills, including "learning how to work with a big group of people, improving public speaking, learning how to hold events and being exposed to many different cultures."

You need to see for yourself. The rigorous Greek system selection process can be intimidating, but some sorority and fraternity members say it's not as bad as it seems. "Most students going into college stereotype fraternities and sororities with negative connotations (party animals, hazing, promiscuous acts). "I never thought that," says Le. "I will say that [rush] was both intimidating and fun."

Pick the right house, and you could find a whole new friend circle—for life. "After college, Greek alumni can call upon their vast network in whatever part of the world career or family takes them," Grossman says.

Greek power can do good. "I constantly hear that the best part of being Greek is the ability to make a difference on campus and in the community through serving others," Grossman says.

In the end, it's a personal choice. Going Greek is not for everyone. "For some students, the most difficult aspect of their membership is making time for everything," Grossman says. "It's important that students be good time-managers so they are able to effectively balance school, family, work and their commitment to their fraternity or sorority."

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