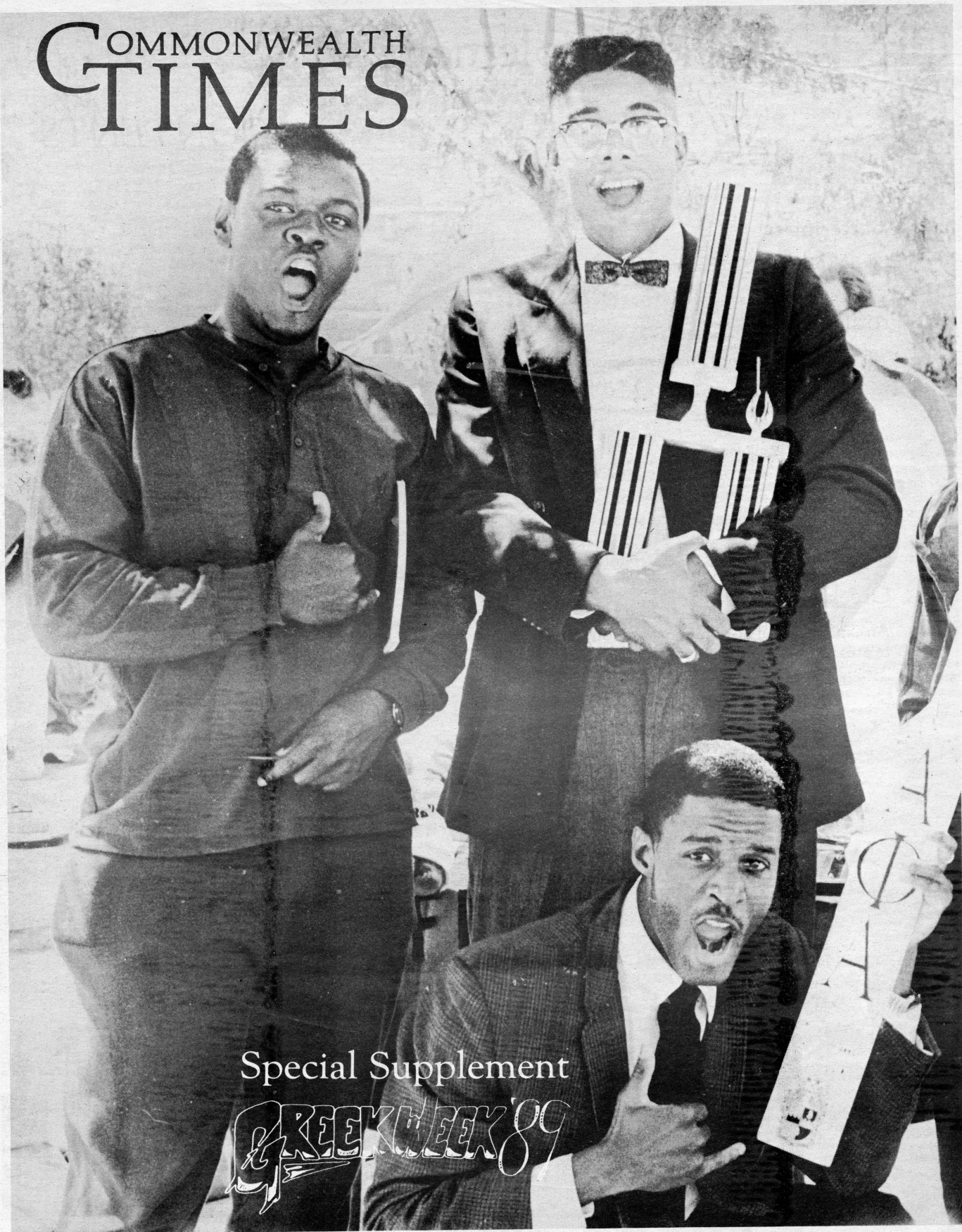


COMMONWEALTH TIMES



Special Supplement

GREEK WEEK '09

Kathy Laraia—Commonwealth Times

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Profile: Council president

By Katie Sharrar
News Editor

Being Greek has given Greek Council president Samer Khalaf a way to get involved on campus.

Khalaf, a junior and member of Theta Delta Chi fraternity, said, "If it wasn't for my fraternity, I probably wouldn't have gotten involved on campus."

Khalaf explained that he pledged Theta Delta Chi in the spring of his freshmen year. He was appointed Greek Council representative the fall after he pledged. This is when his involvement with the Greek Council began.

Although he is now president of the Greek Council, Khalaf emphasized the importance of the representative. He said that the role of the representative is to best express the views of the fraternity or sorority which you are representing.

When pledging, you only get to know your fraternity brothers, he explained. The Greek Council gives Greeks the opportunity to get to know each other and exchange ideas.

"People might tell you that the Greek Council is to regulate the Greeks," he said. "(It was) formed to allow organizations to get to know each other and exchange ideas."

VCU's Greek Council is unusual in the sense that it includes sororities and minority organizations. At most schools, the Greek Council, or Inter-fraternal Council, only governs the fraternities who are members of the National Inter-fraternal Council. National sororities are governed by the Panhellenic Conference while minority organizations are overseen by the National Pan Hellenic Conference. Although VCU does have a Panhellenic Association for its national sororities, it does not have a Pan-Hellenic governing body for its minority organizations. Rather, all Greek letter organizations may have membership in the Greek Council.

Khalaf also explained that the effects of the Greek Council are often not seen.

"This university has a problem with alumnae support," he said. "What the Greeks do is give something for the alumnae to come back to."

Imagine going back to the sixth floor of Rhoads to visit ten years later, he said with a smile.

As president of the Greek Council, Khalaf has instituted a philanthropy record system of recording each organization's specific contribution to the community. This record-keeping system is used later to determine Greek awards. He also will be starting the first Greek newsletter which will be going out to all administration. He hopes that the first issue will come out at the end of the year.

Khalaf emphasized the many aspects of Greek life. "Being Greek means much more than going out drinking and having fun," he said.

Greek life gives incoming freshmen and sophomores a chance to blossom as leaders, he explained. It provides them with "the opportunity to become the leader that you can be without intimidation."

Being Greek can be the proving ground for tomorrow's leaders, he said.

Chartering acts as proving ground

By Beth Kelly
Staff Writer

It's funny how things so quickly take shape when just a few close friends get together late at night to exchange similar wishes, dreams and ideas. Similarity and uniqueness are the two key characteristics to strong friendship and the establishment of a successful organization.

In the past two and a half years three new organizations were started at VCU by groups of friends with ideas they felt were strong enough to develop, expand and share with others. These three organizations are now part of VCU's growing Greek system.

By far, the most important goal of the Greek system is to enhance the educational experience for undergraduate students. The idea is to draw upon the established foundations in order to create grants and scholarships. Equally important is to create a solid membership, financial and leadership base. These are the building blocks for the development of a new fraternity or sorority.

The trend began back in the fall of 1986 when approximately 18 students got together and decided that they wanted to start their own fraternity. According to Larry Wagner, now the fraternity's president, "We all heard good things about the fraternity Phi Sigma Kappa so after a little investigation we decided to go with that specific chapter."

Their first task was to acquire at least 30 members, in order to be considered an organization. The members had to be united for six months and prove that they had solid leadership and financial stability. Once this was accomplished they were considered a provisional chapter, or a colony. By February of 1987 these men had successfully negotiated their colony status and were ready to complete the long list of requirements for initiation into the fraternity, which included raising money for the fraternity and for needy organizations throughout Richmond, such as the Virginia Food Bank. Finally, the

colony was required to present itself to the Greek Council for approval. The colony was accepted and in April of last year was initiated as an official chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa.

Wagner said that so far things have gone very smoothly, aside from the lack of funding, which resulted from cutbacks by the Greek Council. These cuts, said Wagner, are due to the bad reputation that the Greek system has earned through various publicized hazing incidents around the country. Todd Simpson, director of member services for Phi Sigma Kappa's national office, said it is a shame that when one chapter makes the mistake of over-hazing, fraternities all over the country suffer; he compared it to the old saying that one bad apple spoils the whole barrel.

Shortly before Phi Sigma Kappa's chapter got started, another group of guys became interested in starting a new fraternity at VCU. Bryan Aud, vice president of the Greek Council and former president of Kappa Delta Rho, said that they decided VCU needed a new fraternity for students to choose from because the selection was so limited before. By the spring of 1986 they had quickly formed a colony and were striving to become initiated Kappa Delta Rho's. Throughout the fall the pledge class worked hard to fulfill their requirements; they also were occupied with fundraisers and community services around Richmond, including MCV, various hospitality houses, shelters and the United Nations Children's Fund. On May 1, 1987, the pledges were officially initiated into the fraternity.

Since the chapter has become an official part of Kappa Delta Rho the members have continued to help the community and to raise money. Mark Odom, the current president of the fraternity, is especially proud of the Library Benefit program, which he originated. The program is designed to cut the price of various journals to which the library subscribes, and is set up specifically to allow the library to obtain the journals

most popular with students and faculty. Odom confidently added that the library board definitely approves of the program.

Aud said that everything has gone very well with the fraternity so far and they are looking forward to celebrating their two-year anniversary on May 1.

The newest addition to VCU's Greek system is Phi Mu sorority. It was originally called Omega Delta Epsilon back in 1986, when it was started by 11 girls. After they decided that they wanted to become affiliated with a national sorority they were introduced to representatives from the various organizations. "The girls decided to choose Phi Mu because of the exciting and different pledge program offered and because of the strong ideals that the sorority based themselves upon," explained Maureen Murphy, president of Phi Mu.

Phi Mu was founded in 1852 by three 16-year-old girls who considered themselves a literary group. Phi Mu is the second-oldest sorority in the country and has seven chapters in Virginia. By August of last year the girls were a Phi Mu colony and were given several pledge requirements to fulfill. They had to establish good relations with other sororities on campus, meet university standards, establish a stable financial base and plan activities with Richmond Phi Mu alumnae.

The Phi Mu girls have been a colony for seven months, during which time they have been periodically reviewed by national officers. The pledge class has recently been reviewed and accepted by the Greek Council, and they were initiated April 1 in a secret ceremony at the Boulevard Methodist Church. Afterwards the girls held a reception for alumnae, family and close friends at the Holiday Inn Downtown.

The Greek system at VCU has made great strides forward in the last couple of years, and the prevailing attitude is that it can only continue to improve as VCU becomes bigger and better.

25 Greek Organizations at VCU:

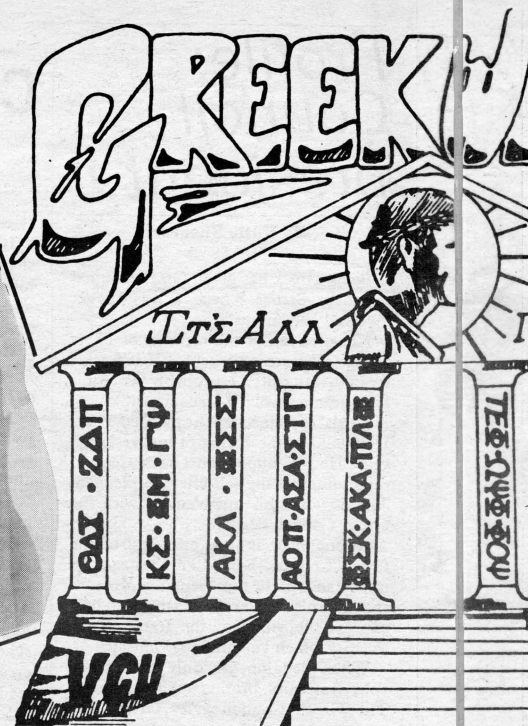
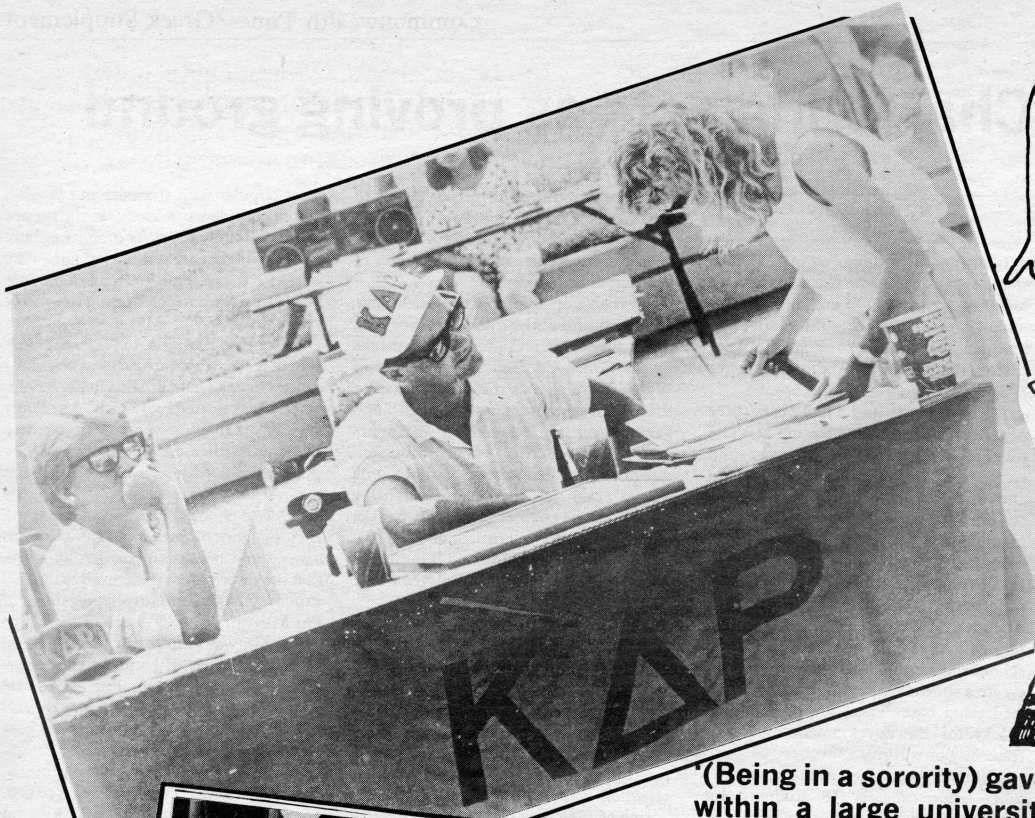
Sororities:

Alpha Sigma Alpha
Alpha Omicron Pi
Phi Mu
Phi Sigma Sigma
Zeta Delta Pi
Zeta Phi Beta
Delta Sigma Theta
Alpha Kappa Alpha
Sigma Gamma Rho

Fraternities:

Kappa Alpha Psi
Alpha Phi Alpha
Phi Beta Sigma
Omega Psi Phi
Phi Omicron Psi
Alpha Kappa Lambda
Gamma Psi
Kappa Delta Rho
Kappa Sigma

Phi Sigma Kappa
Pi Kappa Phi
Pi Lambda Phi
Sigma Phi Epsilon
Tau Epsilon Phi
Sigma Tau Gamma
Theta Delta Chi



'(Being in a sorority) gave me a sense of support within a large university...helped me to seek opportunities in school and later . . . super sense of friendship.'

—Linda Dalch, director of development for the School of Business
Alpha Omicron Pi
University of Tennessee



'For me, as a commuter student, it was a good vehicle to meet people and participate in sports. Like any involvement, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it...Our organization did a lot of charitable work and it gave us a broader sense of community perspective.'

—Sue Ivie, director of recreational sports
Kappa Alpha Theta
University of Iowa





'It was good . . . the brotherhood, comradeship and outreach activities. We did a lot of social projects with the community. We didn't limit it to just one-group interaction. We travelled to other campuses to see what other groups were doing.

—Dr. Napolen Peoples, coordinator of stress management and cultural training
Omega Phi Psi
Wilborforce University (Ohio)



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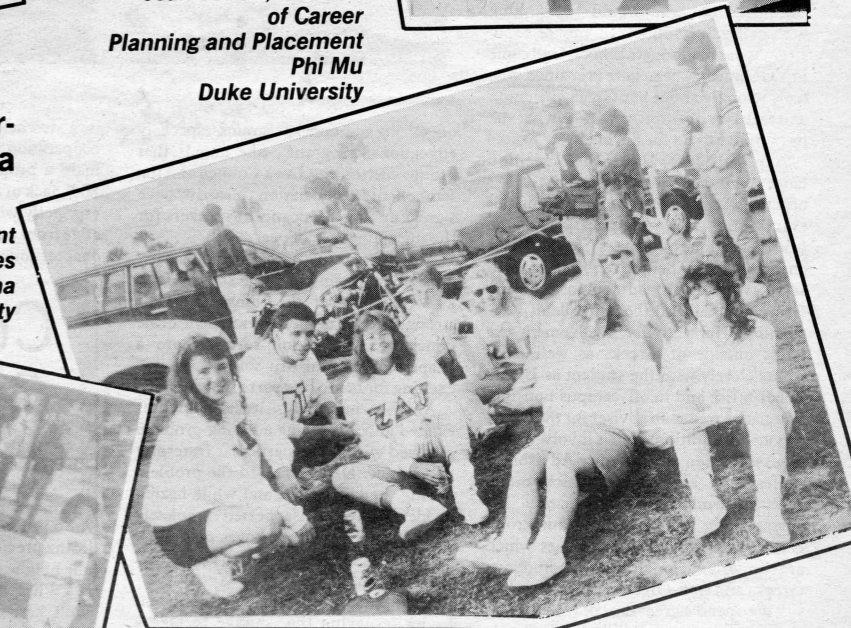
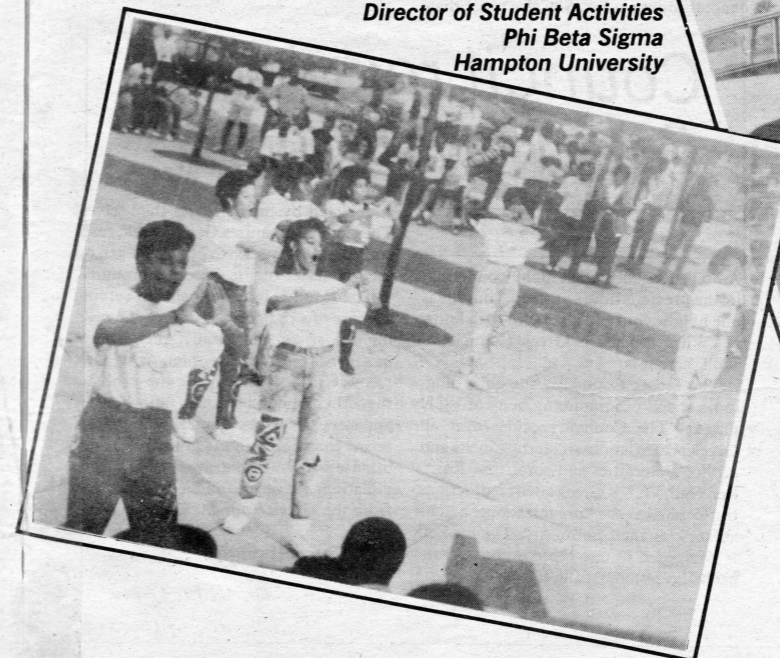
'It was a good for me . . . a gateway. It gave me a chance to try things I otherwise wouldn't have done . . . and it may have started my career in student affairs.'

—Jean Yerian, Director of Career Planning and Placement
Phi Mu
Duke University



'Culture, fun, brotherhood and my alma mater.'

—Ishmail Conway, Assistant Director of Student Activities
Phi Beta Sigma
Hampton University



'I remember how I lucked into being house manager . . . I negotiated free room and board in exchange. Living in a fraternity house is much more meaningful. When I walked into the one here, it really brought back memories.'

—G. Richard Wainwright, director of corporate relations
Phi Sigma Kappa
University of Maryland

GREEK WEEK '89



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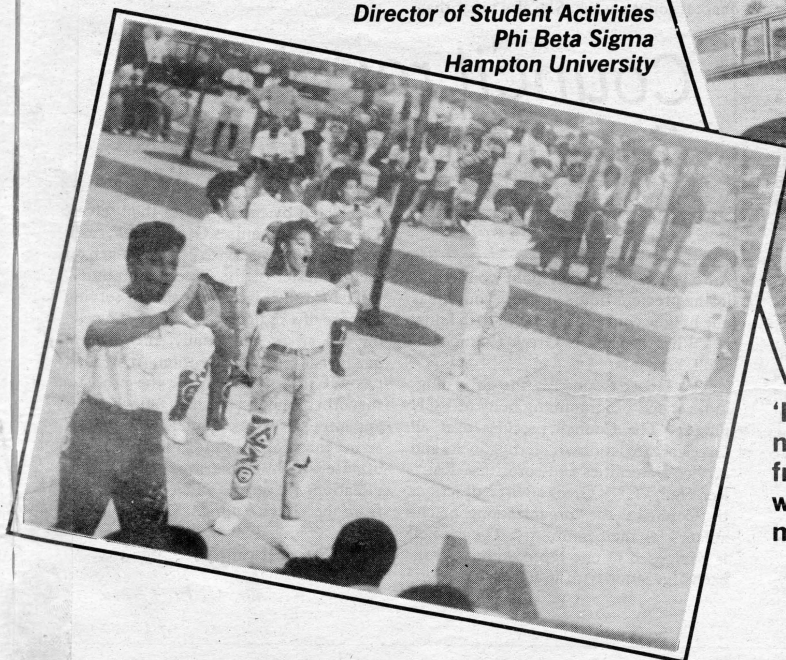
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Profile: Kathleen Hall, Greek advisor

By Erika Johnson
Staff Writer

Kathleen Hall graduated from the University of Louisville with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She currently holds the position of faculty adviser for the Greek organizations at VCU. She misses the teaching field but for now she prefers working with college students. Although the domain has changed the focus and principles are still the same: helping and educating others.

Hall was a commuter student during her four years as an undergraduate at Louisville. While attending the university she worked on campus, lived at home and was a member of a Chi Omega sorority. She pledged in 1979, and this fall will mark the tenth anniversary of her pledging.

"I don't think I would have enjoyed U. of L. as much without the sorority. Through my sorority I got involved in admissions and orientation programs. Those experiences made me appreciate U. of L. and I know that people at VCU in similar programs like the STAR program, New Student Orientation, and Ram Reps. are developing that same appreciation for VCU. When you drive to school and go home you don't learn much," Hall commented.

Hall furthered her education by completing a two-year program for administrators in higher education from Bowling Green State University. The particular program she was enrolled in focused on administrators who would be working with college personnel. In July of 1986, straight out of graduate school, Hall came to VCU and has been here ever since. She feels strongly about her Greek affiliation and feels her position at VCU is what she has wanted to do for a while.

A typical day for Hall includes seeing a large number of students. Many of her office discussions involve the planning of events and the communication of the work being done by officers from different chapters. Part of her job requirement is to serve as the faculty adviser for both the Greek Council and the Panhellenic Association. Her activity involvement extends outside of Greeks as well. Hall works closely with the student assistants in her office and in off-campus housing. She also serves as an adviser for the escort service. In addition, Hall is involved with the Association of Fraternity Advisors, a professional association which meets every December. The Association discusses many topical issues. This group concentrates on discussing issues which are important to all college students, Greeks and non-Greeks alike.

"We spend a great deal of time talking about issues on campus. For example we've looked at issues such as the impact of AIDS on the Greek system, racism on campus, and whether the Supreme Court will allow fraternities and sororities to remain single-sex organizations," said Hall.

Hall feels VCU's program has come a long way in two and a half years, especially in size and organization. She notes that people have become more interested in

organizing additional programs, especially educational programs. She notes that groups such as the Greek Council and the Panhellenic Association already have signed up more educational speakers for the upcoming school year.

There are many successes Hall has felt good about during the time she has been at VCU. One of the things she feels strongly about is the development of the Omega Delta Epsilon sorority into a chapter of the Phi Mu sorority. It was exciting for her to be a part of the process.

Another important situation Hall is excited about is seeing a hazing problem resolved within one particular fraternity on campus. Hall witnessed the problem during her first year, and while hazing incidents have not disappeared completely she has seen definite changes take place and courageous steps taken to counteract the problem.

"One of the problems of being a student leader is having the courage to take a stand in an organization that might end up causing it trouble," Hall commented.

"A lot of people are willing to talk about problems, but no one is willing to change whether it be alcohol abuse or hazing. If it's gonna take someone getting seriously injured or worse then that's what it'll take."

Although Hall sees many good things happening at VCU she admits that there

is a downside. She notes that lack of cooperation and understanding still remain a problem within the groups. To Hall, lack of communication is inevitable especially when you have one representative from a chapter reporting to 24 other chapters once a week. She also notes that

communication between the historically black fraternities and sororities and the white fraternities and sororities is almost

See Hall page 7

Council regulates Greek system

By Will Gregg
Staff Writer

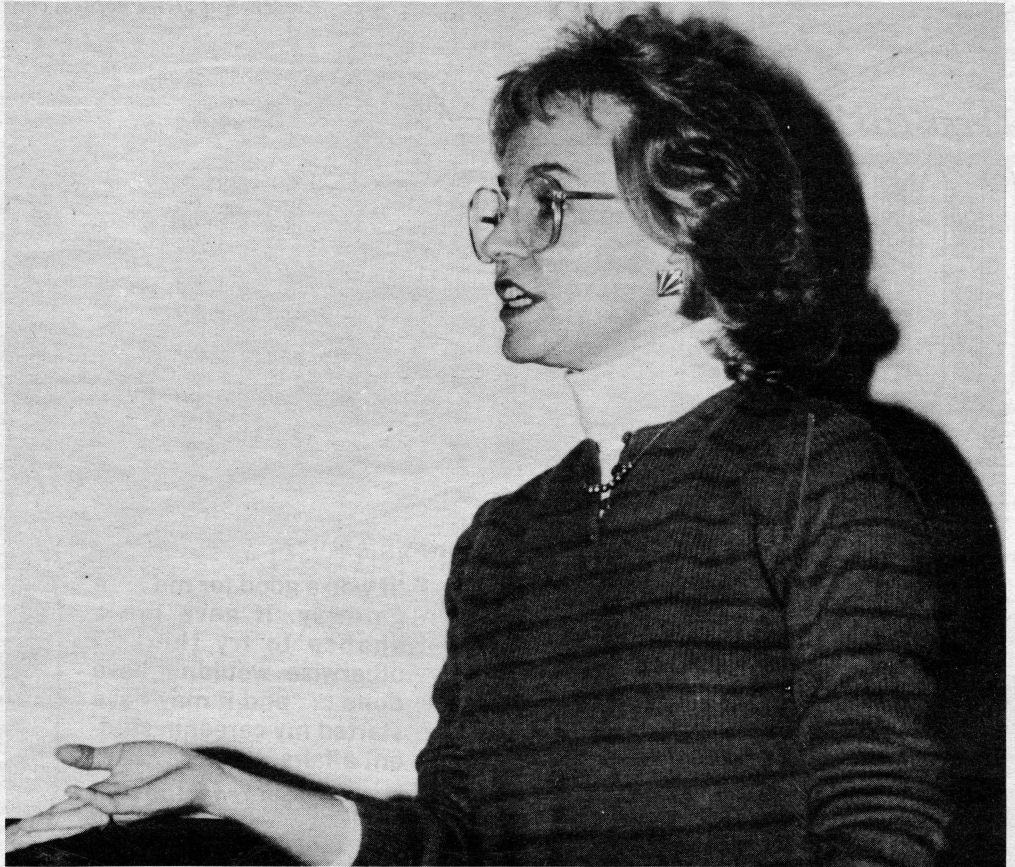
So you've been up at night wondering, losing precious hours of sleep, your life is one hollow void and all you want to know is "What the hell is Greek Council?!!?" Well, here it is:

The Greek Council is the governing, judicial and programming body of VCU Greeks. The Council presides over all Greek organizations, including social and service fraternities and sororities. Kathleen Hall, VCU's Greek adviser, describes the Council as the "organizational mechanism" for the community. The council is composed of one representative from each organization with an Executive Coun-

cil, elected by the delegates themselves. The Council organizes Greek Week, rush, and community service projects taken on each semester by the Greek community.

The Council is also capable of serving as more of a judicial body when the need for one arises. Nationally, the issue of hazing has received attention. At VCU, it has not shown itself to be the problem that other schools have had, but when it is apparent the Greek Council acts on it. If an organization is found guilty of a major offense, such as hazing or dry rush violations, it can be put on suspension from the Greek Council. Under suspen-

See Council page 7



Greeks volunteer

By Christine Leo
Staff Writer

From Feb. 20 until April 24, the Annual Alumni Association sponsors a phone-a-thon to raise funds for the university. The phone-a-thon, headed by Robert J. Fagg Jr., director of the VCU Annual Givings Program, is a 26-night fundraising activity for the 12 schools and one college within VCU. Each school (e.g., the School of Business) is allotted a few evenings to call VCU alumni and solicit money.

The phone-a-thon is held from 6 to 9 p.m. in the University Media Center and is conducted on a 20-line phone bank, which can get hectic at times. Fagg has trouble getting volunteers, so he has organized three student back-up teams composed of members of Kappa Sigma fraternity, Alpha Omicron Pi sorority and Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority. These teams participate on an "as needed" basis.

For the 1987-88 fiscal year, \$145,000 was raised during the phone-a-thon. Volunteers, including the back-up teams, accounted for \$25,000 of it, \$110,000 short of the goal of \$175,000 for the 1988-89 school year.

This money is all donated by VCU alumni. The private dollars are spent on things such as scholarships, internships, lectures and guest speakers.

Fagg stressed the importance of alumni support. "VCU is state-assisted, not state-supported, so we need the money."

Commentary

From the outside

By Bruce Henshaw
Staff Writer

Yours truly in a toga? No way, dude. But hey, it's spring. A time when thoughts turn to Greek Week? Yes, Greek Week, a week-long celebration of the various fraternities and sororities on the VCU campus. Do they deserve it? The answer remains to be seen.

There are 25 Greek organizations found on campus, all with basically the same purpose: brotherhood or sisterhood. So why are there so many different fraternal organizations? I guess there's a fraternity or sorority for everyone. Still, these groups really aren't for everyone.

Some people simply do not like the Greek system. I too had reservations. Yet, when I really thought about it, I realized that the Greek system isn't really that bad. It should remain an active part of university life.

I believe that when people think of the campus Greeks, their thoughts turn to the movie "Animal House." They imagine a group of crazy, drunken pagans chanting, "TOGA . . . TOGA . . . TOGA . . . TOGA." Well, that's Hollywood for you, and even though there may be toga parties on fraternity row, Bluto (John Belushi's character in the movie) would be a little bored.

It seems to me that it's human nature to put something down that one does not understand. Those outside the Greek system see the members within it as conformists and elitists. Perhaps the

Thirty-three percent of VCU's operating budget comes from the state. The rest comes from the phone-a-thon, annual gifts and tuition," he said.

Bill Conner, of Kappa Sigma fraternity, explained his fraternity's involvement with the phone-a-thon: "The Annual Givings Phone-a-thon is the biggest community service event of the year. The event came about six years ago as a haphazard thing, and now it's an annual event."

"VCU became involved when Fagg, who was a member of Kappa Sigma at the University of Richmond, was conducting a phone-a-thon and ran short of help. He called his Kappa Sigma brothers at VCU and asked for volunteers. "Since then it has been an annual event," Conner said.

Although the phone-a-thon lasts only 26 nights, it can take up a lot of time for the student volunteers. Amy Twifor, of Alpha Omicron Pi, explained that the VCU staff makes the atmosphere a little more pleasant by offering dinner and money to the team that can raise the most money in an evening.

Kappa Sigma usually raises the most money; last year, however, the Alpha Omicron Pi team got a large pledge at the last minute and beat the Kappa Sigs.

Student volunteers are usually preferred because the Alumni enjoy speaking to them about how the school has changed.

If you would like to volunteer for your particular school, call Mrs. Theresa W. Rice, Phone-a-thon coordinator, at 367-1233.

people in the system see those outside of it as individualistic and anti-social. Both groups are wrong, due to the fact that no true interaction exists between them.

We've all known someone who has been "blackballed" — exorcised from the group and with no comprehension of the cause. Look at your circle of friends. Isn't there someone who truly wishes to be a part of your group but for reasons of friction or incompatibilities is excluded from the group? The same scenario appears here; the difference is that this circle of brotherhood just happens to have Greek letters on their chests. Would Dead Heads in tie-dyes be the same thing? Well, maybe not, but you get the idea.

Remember that the brothers and sisters involved with the Greek system free will. No twisting of arms or guns pointed at their backs found here. Hazing? It still exists, but the trend keeps moving away from physical abuse to psychological intimidation. Alcohol has been forbidden as part of the rushing process. Sure, it took pressure from school administration and parent groups to pass regulations to deal with the almost-out-of-hand beast known as hazing, but he's still alive.

O.K., so I'm an individual. I don't choose to be a brother. It's not for me, but that does not make me less of a person, not being an Alpha or an Omega? If any brother or sister does, I feel sorry for him. I've met you halfway. You need to come the other half.

Hall

(from page 6)

non-existent. She would like to see this changed. Hall notes that there is an awareness of the problem and believes efforts should be taken to bridge the gap.

"Lack of communication is one (area) the Greek Council will have to work on next year, making sure there is better communication between all the chapters on campus so that everybody has an understanding of what's going on and what opportunities there are for the Greek groups," Hall noted.

A second problem she sees is in scholarship. Greek organizations have traditionally been organizations that have promoted better academics and have rewarded students who have done well in their studies. Hall feels it is necessary for organizations decrease the number of activities that might take students away from their studying and reward the students who do well.

She feels that the VCU has contributed a lot to the Greek system within the last five years. As the system grew very dramatically in the late '70s and early

'80's, more financial support and increased facilities have opened up, Hall said. She also noted that apathy can be a big problem among the Greeks, as well as a lack of awareness. However, because of the increased support at VCU she would

like to see the Greeks take full advantage of the new opportunities.

Hall believes that VCU's Greek system will definitely grow in the next five years. During her time here she has already seen the total Greek membership increase by as much 50 percent. She hopes to see the membership increase to close to 1,000.

Working with students presents a great challenge to Hall. She enjoys her position but admits there are certainly more

difficult aspects of the job than others.

"The hardest part of my job is not being able to help people help themselves," Hall said, "You can't force people to do things. People have to make their own decisions whether it's an organization that makes irresponsible decisions or an individual who makes a decision that they end up regretting. You can't change that. . . but it's good to be able to help people through that."

Council

(from page 6)

sion, the organization loses its vote and voice on the Council, all privileges granted by the university to them as a group and the use of facilities within the Student Commons. Furthermore, that organization's national headquarters is contacted and further disciplinary action could result. The seriousness of the violation is the determining factor that helps the Council decide if suspension is just.

On a lighter note, the Greek Council is, as Hall describes it, "an umbrella group in that it represents a number of smaller groups." This recognition serves to give the Council some authority on University Affairs. The Council has "a voice and a vote on university committees." Currently, the Council is a member of the Committee on Student Affairs, which deals with matters relevant to student life. Another advantage of being an umbrella group is the eligibility for university funds. These funds, in addition to the dues donated by each organization to the Council, are used to finance activities such as Greek Week and the

annual Halloween Dance for the United Way at Cary Street Gym.

"But how is the Council organized? Glad you asked that. The Executive Council is composed of an elected president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The vice-president oversees the activities of the committees: Fraternity Relations, Housing, Greek Week, and Expansion/Extension are all under committee organization. Each committee has its own goals to improve the status of VCU Greeks. The voting body of the Greek Council lies in the 25 Greek organizations on VCU's campus.

The Council of Presidents works alongside the Greek Council. As the name would lead you to believe, it is composed of the presidents of each Greek organization. The Council of Presidents helps to coordinate the activities of individual chapters with the Greek system.

Overall, the Greek Council serves to promote the Greek spirit and involvement with the university. For anyone interested in observing a meeting in session, the meetings are held every Wednesday at 4 p.m. in the Student Commons.

What is hazing?

A. According to the Constitution of the Greek Council, VCU defines hazing as:

1. Physically abusive activities; such as, but not limited to:
 - Any type of coerced physical activity, i.e. excessive exercise, punching, paddling, slapping, etc.
2. Potentially dangerous activities, such as, but not limited to:
 - The forced or required consumption of alcohol or food.
 - Any act of forcing a pledge to accompany a fraternity member on foot or in a motor vehicle.
 - Ritual activities which call for blindfolding, confinement, jumping from heights and other potentially dangerous activities.
3. Activities that interfere with academic achievement, such as, but not limited to:
 - Unexcused absences from class due to pledge activities.
 - Inability to complete assignments due to pledge activities or interference by fraternity/sorority members.
4. Humiliating or demeaning activities, such as, but not limited to:
 - Yelling and screaming at pledges.
 - Practical jokes.
 - Requiring pledges to run errands for fraternity/sorority members.

B. If the fraternity/sorority has a published set of guidelines governing the rights of pledges; that document shall be in the possession of pledges during all pledge activities. A copy of this document shall also be submitted to the Office of Student Activities/University Student Commons for review.

C. A fraternity/sorority shall not allow non-chapter members and/or non-student members to haze pledges.

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THE REPLACEMENTS

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Tommy Keene

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