

features

‘Going Greek:’ AU’s fraternity and sorority life community

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Reporter

As another school year kicks off at Ashland University, a sense of excitement can be felt in the air. From walking along the lines paved with purple and gold, to seeing a towering eagle statue perched with pride, a sense of endless wonder and opportunities can be felt for both returning and new students alike.

This is especially true for Greek Life on campus. A fresh new beginning means the start of recruitment for new fraternity and sorority members for each chapter.

There are four different fraternities and sororities that students can become a part of at AU. Kappa Sigma, Phi Delta Theta, Phi Kappa Psi and Tau Kappa Epsilon are all the fraternities on campus, while Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Phi, Delta Zeta and Theta Phi Alpha are the sororities.

‘Going Greek’ can be a thrilling and life-changing experience, but what exactly is Fraternity and Sorority Life all about at Ashland?

In the movies, Greek Life is often portrayed as having wild parties, underage drinking and hazing like seen in the movie “Animal House.”

Michael Wolfrum, the Vice President of Membership and Recruitment for the Interfraternity Council, said that joining a fraternity or sorority at Ashland is vastly different than what is commonly portrayed in the media.

“We all strive to make each other better men and women,” Wolfrum said. “What I see it about is finding a sense of community and home and creating a bond with people that mesh together.”

When Wolfrum first arrived on campus back in 2016, he had not planned on joining a fraternity. But when all of his friends from the Kem dorm went Greek, he decided to see what it was about.

“When I came in I was very shy and not really involved in anything,” he said. “I remember all my friends from my dorm joining

fraternities, leaving the hall pretty empty, so they convinced me to check it out.”

This was when Wolfrum decided to become a member of Kappa Sigma and he has not looked back since.

“It’s opened so many doors for me through career and leadership opportunities,” he said. “That bond and the lifelong friends you

chapters,” he said. “When I got married a few years ago, four of the groomsmen were fraternity brothers. It’s about the connections and friendships and connections that you make.”

FSL at AU is founded on five different values: brotherhood/sisterhood, scholarship, leadership, service and philanthropy.

“We have these five values and

where recruits can meet the members of different chapters and see if it is the right fit for them.

“You can expect to meet a lot of great guys during this process,” Wolfrum said. “I recommend going to as many different chapter events as possible. The more people you interact with, the better fit you’ll find.”

For sororities, the process is a

together.

Every fall, the FSL community hosts a ‘Greek Lip Sync’ where fraternities and sororities get together and put on a lip syncing show for the other chapters.

“That’s honestly my favorite event for the year,” Wolfrum said. “The number one reason we do it is to raise money for St. Jude’s.”

The other key event happens in the spring with Greek Week.

This is a week-long celebration of fraternities and sororities, Hargis said.

“We do Greek Week in the spring to celebrate the community as a whole to highlight the year,” he said.

Something that sets AU apart from other universities with a Greek presence is the fact that it’s a smaller campus, Matt Giffin, Ashland’s Interfraternity Council president said.

“One thing that strengthens our bond is that Ashland is a smaller campus,” Giffin said. “It’s not like what you really see at the bigger universities.”

Fijalkovich stresses that it is truly nothing like seen in movies, especially when it comes to hazing, she said.

“On a real level, there truly is no hazing,” she said. “Regardless of how big of a university we are, we don’t stand for that. The culture here is so much different than at other universities.”

They make sure they always do the right thing, Giffin said.

“We host educational forums every year on hazing, sexual assault and underage drinking,” he said.

Fijalkovich said that she likes to think of hazing in terms of whether or not you would hurt another family member.

For both Giffin and Fijalkovich, joining their respective chapters is something that has impacted their lives forever.

“I remember telling my parents that I would never join a fraternity but then ended up going to an interest night and liked it,” Giffin said. “It was one of the greatest choices I’ve made in my life.”

Fijalkovich does not know what she would have done if she had never ended up joining her sorority, she said.

“I don’t have any biological brothers or sisters and I knew absolutely no one when I first went to AU,” Fijalkovich said.

Both have words of advice for prospective members that are ready to take part in the process beginning very soon.

“I always say why not, what’s the worst that can happen,” Fijalkovich said. “If you do join, try to have as many friends in different chapters as you can. It’s all about a personal journey.”

If you are even the slightest bit interested, you should go through the recruitment process, Giffin said.

“I recommend everyone at least checks it out,” he said. “The worst that can happen is you meet some new people.”

It truly is a lifelong journey, Fijalkovich said. “You’re a brother or sister for life.”



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY: BECCA FIJALKOVICH
The Panhellenic Council and Interfraternity Council make sure recruitment for new members runs smoothly each year.

make is the biggest thing you get out of it.”

Dustin Hargis, the Assistant Director of Student Life and head of FSL at AU, relates all too well to Wolfrum’s story.

Like him, Hargis’ life was changed forever when he became a part of the Greek community, he said.

“It’s clear to see how it’s impacted my life,” Hargis said. “I’ve made a career out of it.”

Hargis truly has made lifelong friends out of it, even to this very day, he said.

“You are making a lifelong commitment when you join one of our

make sure that each chapter upholds them,” Hargis said.

In order to join a fraternity or sorority, each perspective member can register for recruitment on Ashland’s fraternity and sorority web pages on AU’s website.

From there, two different processes will take place, depending on if you plan to join a fraternity or sorority.

For fraternities, it is a two week process from Sept. 3-14. In that process, men can expect to tour houses, while also attending different events hosted by chapters.

Some events include free chipotle, mini golf or even ‘Teke’ Ball

little different and more formal.

There are three nights of recruitment from Sept. 19-22 where women are matched with recruitment guides that help guide them through party events before a best fit possible is decided for the perspective member and they ‘run home’ to their chapter.

Rebecca Fijalkovich, the Panhellenic Council president, said that a big part of this process is being matched with your big sister, since every new member that joins is considered a ‘little.’

“They’re suppose to be a guide and mentor to push you to be the best that you can be,” she said.

For both fraternities and sororities, each member must receive a bid which they can either accept or deny on bid day.

There are a few different requirements that a student must meet to officially become a part of a chapter, Hargis said.

“Every chapter has slightly different requirements,” he said. “All of them do have GPA and service requirements to meet to go along with weekly chapter meetings once you join.”

Even if you go through the complete process, there is no pressure to commit to a chapter at all, Hargis said.

“The worst that can happen is you meet some new people and then maybe make some friends out of it,” he said.

If joining a chapter is something that a student decides to do, they then become a new member of that chapter where they learn all about what it stands for and their key values.

There are many events to look forward to when joining a chapter, including two key events that bring the entire FSL community



Join FSL’ rock found on campus.

INSTAGRAM

Iyad Ajwa

Continued from A1

This was seen through Ajwa recently developing the curricula of two new majors: Cyber Security and Software Design and Development, two growing industries in today’s society.

“It’s a testament that Iyad was always looking forward, and looking at the marketplace,” Weber said.

While Ajwa was a beloved and

integral part of the AU community, Weber said, he had also made long-lasting relationships with many other faculty members at AU; the closest being Aune and Weber.

In 2005, Aune and Ajwa began co-teaching a course called “Understanding Islam in Today’s World.” Since that time, the two professors had enjoyed teaching this course every other year and have received extraordinary feedback about the class, calling it “one of the most interesting and helpful courses in the AU curriculum.”

“After the tragedy of Sept, 11, 2001, we saw the need to develop a course that would provide accurate information about the religion of Islam at a time when misinformation was the order of the day,” Aune said.

Although Ajwa and the other mathematics professors at AU did not have a close personal relationship, their professional relationship was unmatched by any other such relationship at AU, Swanson said.

The group of four had been working together since 2000 after the addition of Dr. Darren Wick

who joined the team of Dr. Gordon Swain (1994), Ajwa (1997) and Swanson (1999).

“The four of us have been through a lot together, the ups and downs of the department, we’ve made it through,” Swain said. “We have kind of all worked together to grow the department to make sure we take care of the students...Dr. Ajwa was definitely at the center of that.”

Relationships with his God, family, colleagues and students is what made Iyad Ajwa such a beloved, caring, gentle, faithful and compassionate man that meant so

much to so many people.

Ajwa is survived by his wife, Nadia, and his two sons, Ismaeil and Omar, both current students at Ashland University.

“As I now realize what he must have been dealing with for the last several years, I am in awe,” Daniel McDonald, chair of the department of art and associate professor of art said in a written statement. “We sometimes meet people that inspire us to live fuller, more positive lives. Dr. Iyad Ajwa was one of those people.”