

Graduation and Retention Study

Phase 4

Fraternity and Sorority Analysis

Approximately 40% of Lehigh's undergraduate population joins a fraternity or a sorority and that raises the question of how fraternity and sorority membership affects retention and graduation rates. This report uses the cohorts and analytic techniques used in the Phase 1 through 3 reports to compare the retention and graduation data for fraternity and sorority members with their non Greek counterparts.

Because of the significant differences in graduation rates between female and male students described in Phase 3, the main analysis in this report separates the genders. Specifically, fraternity members are compared with the male students who do not join a fraternity and sorority members are compared with the female students who do not join a sorority.

Of course, all members do not remain active in a fraternity or sorority at the same level until they graduate and/or leave the university. Including changing relationships with a fraternity or sorority in the analysis was judged to be beyond the data available and the methodology being used. Consequently, the entire analysis is based on whether or not a student did or did not join a fraternity or sorority during their time at Lehigh. This partitions each freshman cohort into four sub cohorts by dividing the students who never join a fraternity or sorority by gender. These later cohorts will be referred to as independent female students and independent male students.

A more general question is how does belonging to less formal groups than fraternities and sororities affect retention and graduation patterns? The one such group that was easily identified and could be studied was Taylor College, however, the numbers are on the small side. Each year Taylor selects and invites 50 to 60 incoming freshman to live in Taylor and these invitations are actively sought by the incoming students. A few of them do decide to join a fraternity while at Lehigh.

Because the numbers are small the Taylor students were not divided by gender. To keep the analysis of the Taylor students separate from the study of the Greek living organizations, those that joined a fraternity or sorority were deleted from the Taylor cohort. Moreover, the Taylor students were only compared with the independent students (female and male) who were not in the Taylor cohort.

Findings

1. For the 1994 through the 1998 cohorts, fraternity members had a freshman retention rate that was 10% to 15% higher than the independent male students. This is statistically significant at less than 0.0001%.
2. For the 1994 through the 1997 cohorts, fraternity members had a sophomore retention rate that was 6% to 9% higher than the independent male students and significant at the 0.5% level.
3. Except for the 1996 cohort, the junior retention rate for fraternity members was 5% higher than that of the independent male students and significant at the 2% level.
4. For the 1994 through the 1998 cohorts, sorority members had a freshman retention rate that was 9% to 14% higher than the independent female students. This is statistically significant at less than 0.001%.
5. The sophomore and junior retention rates for sorority members are consistently higher than those for independent female students, but the differences are not as significant as they are for fraternity members. Only the two largest differences for both rates are significant at the 1% level and the rest are not close to being significant. Of course, this is entirely consistent with the generally higher retention rates for female students.
6. As with gender the accumulative effects of consistently higher retention rates are dramatic. The six-year graduation rates available are 15% to 20% higher for fraternity and sorority members than for independent male and female students respectively. For all 5 cohorts the differences in persistence rates to year 4 is significant at the 0.002% level or less for both fraternity and sorority members.
7. The freshman that lived in Taylor College in the fall of 1994 and 1995 graduated at a rate 17% to 19% higher than the students who did not live there and did not join a fraternity or sorority. To some extent this pattern will continue through 1996 and 1997 because the difference in four-year graduation rates for the same groups are between 13% and 16%.

Retention Rates – Full Cohort

Freshman Retention:

<u>Retention Rates – Year 1 to 2</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
1994	100.0%	85.4%	99.5%	87.3%
1995	99.3%	87.6%	99.5%	87.7%
1996	99.1%	88.1%	99.5%	86.2%
1997	98.9%	89.0%	99.0%	89.6%
1998	99.6%	87.9%	100.0%	89.5%

Sophomore Retention:

<u>Retention Rates – Year 2 to 3</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
1994	94.7%	88.4%	92.7%	88.4%
1995	93.8%	85.5%	93.2%	90.2%
1996	94.4%	86.2%	96.7%	89.9%
1997	96.5%	90.1%	96.8%	87.4%
1998	94.8%	92.5%	97.7%	94.1%

Junior Retention:

<u>Retention Rates – Year 3 to 4</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
1994	97.2%	92.0%	98.9%	92.1%
1995	96.2%	91.0%	98.9%	93.7%
1996	95.1%	93.6%	96.2%	94.7%
1997	96.7%	90.8%	97.8%	97.4%
1998	97.9%	92.9%	97.7%	96.9%

Persistence and Graduation Rates – Full Cohort

<u>Persistence</u> <u>Rates to</u> <u>Year 3</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
	1994	94.7%	78.1%	92.7%
1995	93.5%	75.5%	92.7%	79.1%
1996	94.4%	76.2%	96.7%	77.9%
1997	96.1%	82.0%	96.3%	78.7%
1998	94.5%	81.3%	97.7%	84.6%

<u>Persistence</u> <u>Rates to</u> <u>Year 4</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
	1994	94.0%	75.0%	93.8%
1995	91.4%	70.4%	94.8%	76.8%
1996	91.6%	74.3%	94.9%	79.0%
1997	94.0%	76.9%	95.8%	80.7%
1998	94.1%	76.8%	96.6%	83.3%

<u>Four -Year</u> <u>Graduation</u> <u>Rates</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
	1994	77.0%	57.0%	85.5%
1995	73.0%	56.6%	93.2%	68.6%
1996	67.7%	58.0%	89.3%	73.8%
1997	71.2%	64.9%	89.0%	75.1%

<u>Six-Year</u> <u>Graduation</u> <u>Rates</u>	Male		Female	
	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Sorority</u>	<u>Independent</u>
	1994	92.0%	76.0%	93.8%
1995	91.4%	71.5%	95.3%	79.5%