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Sisters and Sorors: The Differences and Similarities Between Predominately White and Predominately Black Sororities
 By: Julia C.L. Jacobs
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The Sororal Organization

A Brief History...

Alpha Delta Pi

- The Adelpian Society-Founded May 15, 1851 at Wesleyan Female College in Macon, Georgia
- In 1905 the society renamed themselves as Alpha Delta Phi and eventually Alpha Delta Pi

Kappa Alpha Theta

- Founded January 27, 1870 at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana as the first Greek Letter Organization for women

Alpha Kappa Alpha

- Founded January 15, 1908 at Howard University became the first sorority established by African American women

The purpose of my project

- To determine if members of predominately White sororities view sisterhood differently than members of predominately Black sororities

Why this study is important

- A deeper understanding of predominately White sororities and predominately Black sororities is important because...
 - Behavior and activities within sororities appears to be a microcosm of the family life that the young women came from
 - An understanding between the differences and similarities of these organizations will increase more co-sponsored programs between these two different types of sororities
 - An understanding of the expectations of these two different types of sororities and the different types of experiences each offers will help prospective new members determine which type of sorority is best for them.

What I realized early on...

- In order to understand how these two different types of sororities view sisterhood I would have to
 - Have an extensive understanding of how the organizational structures of both types of organizations operate
 - Have an extensive understanding of why the different types of sororities were founded in the first place
 - See how members of the different types of sororities felt about their sorority in particular
 - Determine what most members of the different types of sororities thought the purpose of their sorority was

NPC and NPHC



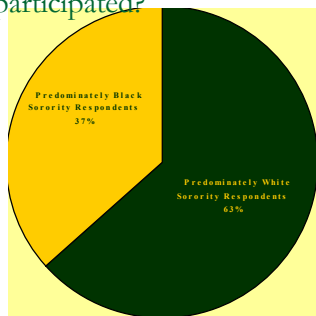
- NPC-National Panhellenic Council-Umbrella organization for 26 predominately White Sororities
- NPHC-Umbrella Organization for the 4 historically African-American sororities as well as the five historically African-American fraternities



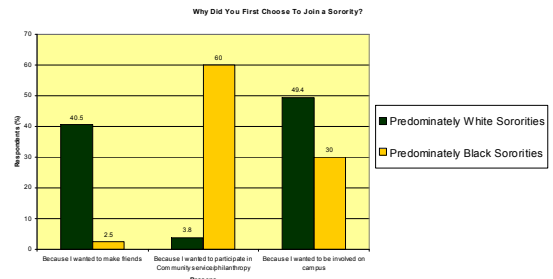
My Research

- I interviewed the presidents of 2 NPC sororities and the presidents of 2 NPHC sororities
- I interviewed 1 Greek Life Coordinator who has worked in Greek Affairs for 7 years
- I designed a survey based on my interviews and my observant participation
- The survey was administered to 86 NPC sorority members and 50 NPHC sorority members
- Another survey was administered to 3 Greek Life Coordinators who have worked in Greek Affairs ranging from 7-10+ years

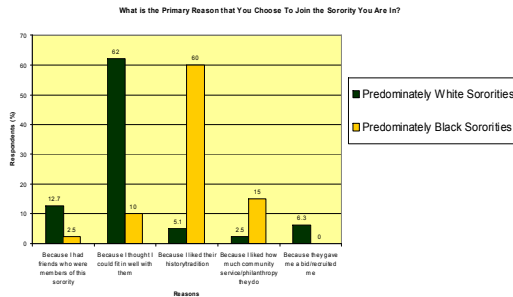
How many women from each type of sorority participated?



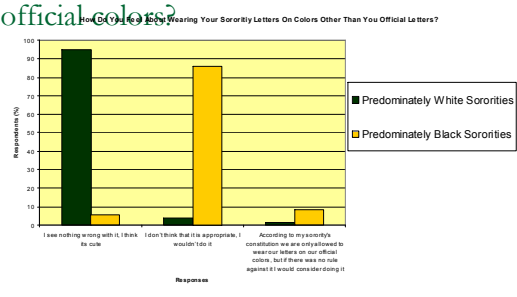
Why did you first chose to join a sorority?



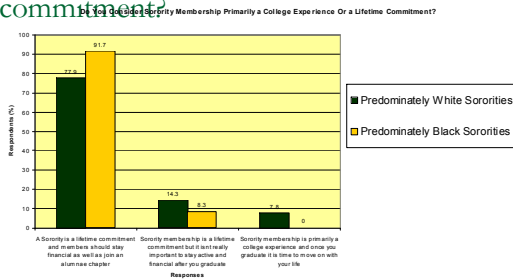
What is the primary reason that you chose to join the sorority that you are in?



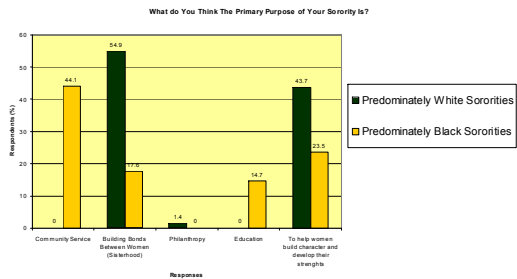
How do you feel about wearing your sorority letters on colors other than your official colors?



Do you consider sorority membership primarily a college experience or a lifetime commitment?



What do you think the primary purpose of your sorority is?



ΠΒΦ-ΑΣΤ-ΑΦ-ΦΣΣ-ΚΑΘ-ΓΦΒ-ΦΜ-ΑΔΠ-ΣΚ-ΔΦΕ-
ΚΔ-ΔΖ-ΔΔΔ-ΣΣΣ-ΣΔΤ-ΑΧΩ-ΑΕΔ-ΧΩ-ΔΓ-ΑΟΠ-
ΖΤΑ-ΑΓΔ-ΚΚΓ-ΑΔΠ-ΘΦΛ-ΑΣΑ

- White sororities were founded by women who came from privileged backgrounds
 - (1851-1917)
- The primary focus of these groups was to formulate a strong social system for young white women who were away at college



"THE PURPOSE OF KAPPA DELTA IS TO PROMOTE TRUE FRIENDSHIP AMONG THE COLLEGE GIRLS OF OUR COUNTRY BY INCULCATING INTO THEIR HEARTS AND LIVES THOSE PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH, OF HONOR, OF DUTY, WITHOUT WHICH THERE CAN BE NO TRUE FRIENDSHIP"

- It is common to look at a predominately white sorority's national website and see that most always their primary goals at founding were...
 - "To create a feeling of unity among pioneering young women" (Pi Beta Phi)
 - "The objectives of our Fraternity are the promotion of growth in character; unity of feeling, sisterly affection, and social communion among our members." (Alpha Phi)



ΑΚΑ-ΔΣΘ-ΖΦΒ-ΣΓΡ

- Black sororities were founded by women who were accustomed to segregation as a norm and who would have never been considered for membership into a predominately White sorority
 - (1908-1922)
- The primary focus of these groups was to formulate a group of community oriented African- American women whose primary goals were to uplift the African-American community

Zeta Phi Beta was founded on the simple belief that sorority elitism and socializing should not overshadow the real mission for progressive organizations- to address societal mores, ills, prejudices, poverty, and health concerns of the day.



- It is common to look at the website of a predominately Black sorority and find that the primary goals at founding were...

- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority's aim is to enhance the quality of life within the community. Public service, leadership development and education of youth are the hallmark of the organization's programs and activities. Sigma Gamma Rho addresses concerns that impact society educationally, civically, and economically. (Sigma Gamma Rho, Mission Statement)
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide assistance and support through established programs in local communities throughout the world (Delta Sigma Theta)



Conclusion

- Both predominately White sororities and Predominately Black sororities value sisterhood among other things
 - The way that these groups demonstrate their belief in sisterhood is very different
 - Predominately White sororities tend to be a social outlet for young women in college. The women show their sisterhood by being there for each other and prove their unity through community involvement
 - Predominately Black sororities are meant to be service organizations geared towards the African-American community. Dedication to the community is the primary goal of these groups and sisterhood is developed secondarily through the common interest of uplifting the African-American community



Sixteenth French delegation, Lunenburg, Kentucky, 1944



Acknowledgements

- My Mother, Dr. Odesa Weatherford Jacobs, for being my inspiration for a higher education
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- My Advisor Dr. Willmott
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- Most off all, my boyfriend, Thomas Phillips for having as much interest in this topic as I do and for protecting me from vicious sorority girls