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1 As part of Alpha Rho Chi's philanthropy, brothers and pledges carved pumpkins for the Leslie Science Center. Pictured here are brothers Alyssa Kargl and Andrew Tehranisa and pledges Jamie Lutz, Shelby Mitchinson, Taylor Mortorff and Kati Albee. Photo submitted by Meghan Royster.

2 George Ajine-Basil, Astrid Santiago, and Austin Rovinski practice interviewing skills at a mock interview event by the Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity. Photo submitted by Kathleen Chou.

PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS WITH A SIDE OF FUN

WRITTEN BY KAITLIN SCHULER. DESIGNED BY CIERA CLAYBORNE.

Although 20 percent of the undergraduate population participates in Greek life, this statistic does not account for the students who choose professional Greek life instead. The professional fraternities at the University offer students the benefits of a close-knit group, similar to Greek life, with an added bonus of a major-centered aspect. Each fraternity is geared towards a certain major or career and gives students an expansive network of contacts both during college and following commencement.

Even with all the benefits, however, incoming undergraduates still know very little about professional Greek life and wonder why they should pick professional over social. Engineering and Theatre & Dance fifth year Charlotte Campbell addressed this issue, explaining her own experience in Theta Tau, a co-ed engineering fraternity. "In my fraternity, all my brothers are also engineers and that fits with my lifestyle. They can help me with classes and let me borrow books, and I can do the same [for them]. Many alumni members reach back to the fraternity for recruiting purposes and that can lead to great job and internship opportunities. Also, they make great friends and allow for a social life among our busy engineer lifestyle. "Campbell said that the social stigma and media representation of regular Greek life immediately turned her off from even considering rushing a normal sorority, as well as her typical friend group. "I'm a very relaxed and down to earth person. I tend to make friends easier with guys, so being a part of a co-ed fraternity was a big draw."

The pledge process, or rushing, is also more relaxed for professional fraternities, according to Campbell. "We have requirements for participation in the fraternity to simply ensure the pledges see all aspects of our fraternity and get to know as many brothers as possible. It ensures that all brothers know, approve, accept and love each other." A relaxed atmosphere, professional contacts and a sense of community – professional fraternities combine the strengths of student organizations and social Greek life to make a hybrid branch for those seeking the benefits of both.

3 Architecture junior Taylor Franz, the current Worthy Architect (President) of APX, talks with Steve Janick, an APX alum who is very involved with current brothers. APX organizes regular events with alumni in order to talk about their experience with architecture in the professional and academic world. Photo submitted by Meghan Royster.

4 Professional fraternities offer generations of connections for current University students. Members have the chance to meet past fraternity members in their field of study and to expand their network of contacts. Photo by Julie Gursha.

5 LSA sophomore Maureen Faul attends an APX glass blowing day when brothers went to Baron Glassworks in Ypsilanti to make vases and glasses with a professional glass blower. Photo submitted by Meghan Royster.

BOTTOM PAGE EDGE
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