Repping Our Letters

Perceptions and Realities of LGBTQ+ Students in Greek Life

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Research Questions

- What does sense of belonging mean to LGBTQ+ students in Greek Life?
- What kind of resources are being offered to LGBTQ+ students in Greek Life, if any?
- How are the expectations of Greek life compared to the realities of organizations?

Literature

01 LGBTQ+ Students in Higher Education (Rankin, 2010)
- Literature is limited
- LGBTQ+ students experience "unwelcoming & hostile campuses
- Difficulty in finding community/sense of belonging

02 LGBTQ+ Students in Greek Life (Welter, 2012; Etengoff et al., 2022)
- LGBTQ+ students distance themselves from Greek life
- Joined for social life, create change or live authentically
- Positive experiences but overall negative perception

03 Sense of Belonging in College (Strayhorn, 2019)
- Social support, feeling connected, being valued/respected
- Sense of belonging particularly important for students with marginalized identities

Perceptions

Whiteness

4/7 participants cited associating whiteness to Greek life.

Participants viewed Greek organizations as homogeneously white and felt that they would have to abide by norms set by this population

Socioeconomic Status

6/7 participants cited associating financial wealth to Greek life.

"Greek life is a ladder to climb socioeconomic classes"- Student #6
Participants believed that one had to be from an affluent background in order to join or that joining would help change their current status

Realities

Community

4/7 participants sought out community in Greek life.

Participants hoped to find community within organizations but many disaffiliated when not feeling a sense of belonging

Masking

4/7 participants felt the need to mask their identity while in Greek life.

Participants felt that they needed to "hide" their identity during recruitment or while in the organization

Recommendations

01 Creation of Resources
- Create spaces for community
- Collaborate with other departments to create education and recources

02 Changes to Policy
- Creation of LGBTQ+ Task Force
- Protect students and enable them to make change
- Create structure for addressing current problems in policies

03 Continuation of Research
- Affect of involvement in Greek life in terms of development for LGBTQ+ students
- LGBTQ+ student involvement on campuses
- Difference of perception/realities between LGBTQ+ identities