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The Pressure to BELONG in Greek Life

The pressure to bELONg here at Elon University is something that a lot of students face during their academic career. Whether the pressures are from academics or conforming to the way students dress, one pressure that a lot of students will come across is the pressure of joining a Greek organization. The Fraternity and Sorority life at Elon is very apparent. Everywhere you go, you see students wearing t-shirts that say “Date Party 2015” or something along the lines of “Spring Rush 2016”. Ashley Follenweider, a first year student in Zeta Tau Alpha, has a lot to say on the reasons why she just joined her sorority. Sean Barry, a senior in Delta Upsilon, elaborates on his past 3 years being part of the fraternity and some of the pros and cons to being part of it. Many students feel that just because they see their peers joining a Greek organization, they should join one as well.

Ashley Follenweider came into college with the mindset that a sorority was just part of everyone’s college experience. “I thought that was kind of part of the college experience, and when I got to Elon, I saw that Greek life was really prevalent”. Ashley feels that being part of a sorority has been the best experience that she’s had here at Elon. She goes into more detail talking about how much Greek life has impacted her life already, “I really enjoy the sisterhood, I love meeting new friends, like my best friend now, I’m rooming with her next year and I just met her like a month ago and she’s already my best friend”.

A typical Friday night for the majority of Elon students is getting dressed with your friends around 11 p.m. and then going out around midnight to a frat party. The party scene here at Elon is definitely dominated by fraternities, with the exception of a few club sports. Ashley explains that she feels pressure to be part of a Greek organization because of the social component that comes with it. She says, “If I were to not be part of a sorority, then my experience would be different. It would be different in a negative way”. The pressures of Greek life seem to revolve mainly around the social aspect of college. Most people want to feel like they have friends and that they are not going to be home alone on a Friday night. These kinds of feelings drive students to be part of a fraternity or sorority. Now that many students are part of these organizations, they attract more students by having social events and apparel to show off around campus.

After being part of Greek life for three years, a person will definitely get a different perspective of what it’s like to be part of the community. All the parties, socials, and Greek events start to become monotonous after a few years, and your bank account starts to drain itself trying to pay all the fraternity dues, social dues, and banquet dues. Sean Barry, a senior in Delta Upsilon, has had an experience that has had its ups and downs while being part of the Greek organization. Overall, he enjoyed his time with the fraternity, but it’s not something that he necessarily needed to feel like he bELONged here at Elon; however, there were definitely pressures within the fraternity that kept him there. While Sean is heavily involved in other things like being the senior class president, or running SGA, or even being a leadership fellow, being part of Delta Upsilon has had it’s pros and cons. He elaborates more on why he has had a positive yet sometimes negative experience being part of the organization.

Structure:

* Go more in depth and fill in more quotes to support my argument about the pressures of Greek life.
* Follow up interview with both subjects to ask more questions that will hopefully support my argument
* Discuss Sean’s story and his feelings on Greek life and the impact that it’s had on him
* Write a concluding paragraph that ties everything together and restates my thesis about the pressures of Greek life