

LEAVE FRATS AND SORORITIES TO THE UNIVERSITIES

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What's so great about Greek life anyway?

Fraternities and sororities are two college staples that a lot of people want to join; we yearn for community, so when a manufactured one is right at our fingertips, who wouldn't grab it?

Fraternities and sororities are organizations that focus on building connections with one another, socialization, academic achievements and networking in order to find jobs and internships. The difference is fraternities are run by men and sororities are run by women.

Movies are made surrounding Greek life like "Monsters University" and "House Bunny." The college students in them make it sound so enticing that you can't help but want to join. The community, the friendships, the access to opportunities and the ability to go to parties anytime you want. How fun is that?

So if it is so great, why aren't there any at community colleges? Should there be fraternities and sororities, or more specifically, Greek organizations at Fresno City College?

Honestly, I hope that never happens.

Greek life began way back in 1776 at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. The first sorority is debated, but the first to be named was at Syracuse University in New York in 1874.

Fresno State has 38 single-sex fraternities and sororities near campus, each with their own house and block. For over 95 years, these organizations have housed over 1,000 students and there will be plenty more.

I know a couple of girls who have joined sororities which I think is phenomenal for them who want to create community, build relationships with others and network to earn experience and opportunities.

As the years went on, thousands of these organizations began showing up in different universities and the popularity grew. But there is a price to be paid when it comes to wanting to become a brother or sister.

I find that frats and sororities can be a good source of

community and acceptance among those who want to find their place in college. And they are a good source of finding jobs and making connections.

I find frats and sororities to be dangerous and overwhelming places to be in. Plus the amount of allegations and hazing that goes on is enough to kill any interest.

Since 2000, there have been 122 recorded deaths due to hazing. That is roughly five deaths per year. I think these are risks students at FCC should not take. It is far too dangerous.

Just recently, at the University of Iowa, a dozen young men were found blindfolded and covered in strange substances in a basement due to the frat's hazing rituals. I find that to be incredibly jarring and bizarre.

Diversity is a big issue too when it comes to joining a fraternity or sorority. They are predominantly white and those involved are usually rich as well. It makes minorities less likely to join despite the constant pledge of community and inclusion.

However as society begins to evolve and change, there are now houses dedicated to race so that only specific members can join like the Divine Nine, a string of predominantly black fraternities and sororities.

This is great for universities with a large and diverse community, but I don't think having a fraternity or sorority at FCC is a good idea, because it could lead to a divide among those deemed worthy and those who aren't.

The way a person is able to join is through a voting system and a lot of those requirements are set in stone like personality or GPA. It can also rely on extracurriculars or even a letter of recommendation.

Sometimes, it can even cost you money. At Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, a semester in a sorority can cost a new member up to \$660. And that is cheap compared to the University of Alabama where a new member fee is \$3,800.

This is, again, where that divide can come in especially when it comes to income or wealth.

Those who can't afford aren't even able to join, which leaves those in power to stay or decide who is worthy.

I think this is an incredibly toxic mindset to have when it comes to wanting to join a fraternity or sorority and could leave people feeling discouraged.

While fraternities and sororities have a lot of good that can come out of them, I think the bad outweighs it. Joining a chapter can come with a price, both literally and figuratively. I think Greek life has a place at a university, but not at FCC.

However, that isn't to say finding community at FCC is impossible. We have plenty of opportunities here to find our niche and I think these outlets are much healthier and safer than a fraternity or sorority.

At FCC alone, we have 42 different clubs a person can join, each unique in their own way and there is something for everyone like if you're into anime or social justice, there's a club for you.

If you are interested in the arts, FCC has plenty of opportunities to get creative like theater or choir or band. Even The Rampage itself is a great place to build connections and network with others.



An outside view of Delta Sigma Phi, a fraternity house at Fresno State located on Millbrook near the university lined up with different fraternities on April 30. The fraternity houses were different shapes and sizes with security gates and fences to ensure safety for members and nonmembers alike. Photo by Katrina Saldivar.

LOVING ANIMALS AND EATING MEAT: INTO THE WORLD OF HYPOCRISY

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Billie Eilish recently caused controversy after stating that people cannot love animals and eat meat, claiming they are direct contradictions in an interview by Elle Magazine.

Eilish said, "You can eat meat! Go for it! You can love animals. But you can't do both."

On the surface, it seems like just another unpopular celebrity opinion that sparks conversation and publicity. However, when looking at the take a bit deeper, it is easy to see how disconnected and hypocritical wealthy celebrities truly are.

While people did agree with this, because it can be true when looking at it from the surface, what she didn't take into account was the nuanced society that we live in. Generalized statements like this will always come across as privileged and overly simplistic.

For wealthy celebrities, veganism is far more accessible than it is for the average person. Celebrities often have personal chefs, nutritionists, expensive grocery budgets and the time to carefully plan meals. In contrast, many families are simply trying to afford food at all in today's economy. Meat remains one of the cheapest and most practical ways for many people to get protein and nutrients, especially when feeding an entire household.

The issue is not that Eilish is vegan or that she advocates for animals rights. That is an important cause to support when many brands in and out of the food industry have a history of animal cruelty. The larger problem that I have is the hypocrisy that can be associated with celebrity activism.

Eilish heavily promotes ethical living and being sustainable. On her website, she includes a tab which shows how her team focuses on sustainability and recycling.

While doing this she is also promoting brands such as Maybelline, a company owned by L'Oreal. Both have faced criticism regarding animal testing policies, seeing as neither are cruelty free certified by PETA or Leaping Bunny.

While Maybelline themselves have stated that they do not test on animals, no outside fact-checking has been able to confirm that.

So while she preaches that she is vegan and that you can't love animals whilst also eating them, she has no problem using and supporting brands that might test on animals.

It is hard to bash Eilish when so many celebrities use products like this. Why does it matter so much when she does it?

The contradiction and hypocrisy is what ultimately frustrates me. Celebrities put themselves in a morally superior position when focusing on their platform of what they believe in while also benefiting from the same corporate systems they criticize.

All to say, Billie Eilish is not the only celebrity who can be criticised for having disconnected opinions.

Jaden Smith went viral in 2018 after doing an interview where he made a comment that people his own age were not discussing the "economic and political state of the world." While conversation surrounding this topic is very important, it can be difficult to hear it coming from someone that was born into extreme wealth.

Smith is the son of Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, who are very famous and wealthy. While Jaden Smith did not choose to be born into this family, he has had opportunities and financial security that most young people will never have.

For many Americans, discussions about the economic state of the world aren't just philosophical debates to bring up to your other wealthy friends, but their everyday lives. People are weighed down by upcoming rent charges, grocery prices and incurred debt.

Celebrities are able to discuss struggles of society and how it should be changed, then go home to their lavish lifestyles and remain disconnected from any repercussions of struggles.

Most celebrities aren't perfect. When you have that much money and power it is impossible to not lose your sense of reality. You start promoting things that you shouldn't, and all celebrities are subject to criticism from their audience. What makes the criticism bigger is when this disconnect from reality to get more money becomes hypocritical.

In an interview with Billboard, Eilish criticised major musicians for releasing multiple vinyl variants of one album. She claimed that she is an environmentalist and would not want to be wasteful like some bigger artist. People online started speculating that this was about Taylor Swift, although this was never confirmed.

Taylor Swift can be criticised for doing this, but she's never claimed to be an environmentalist or sustainable, so I find Swift putting these variants out way less annoying



Graphic by Collins Tanomkhum

than when Eilish does something. When Eilish's album "Happier than Ever" dropped, it included at least eight different variants.

Swift and Eilish did the same thing, dropping a bunch of merch and physical pieces of media that felt like capitalist garbage, which is what Eilish is constantly fighting against. You cannot stand against capitalism, then stand right next to it when the dollar signs come rolling in.

The problem is not that Eilish isn't perfect, no public figure is. The issue is when celebrities build brands around activism and morality while also participating in the same consumer culture.

She painted herself as a savior of the environment and everyone else as the villain, but at the end of the day also falters.

These moments highlight the growing frustration that regular people are starting to get with celebrity activism. They cannot speak up about issues as though they fully understand what the struggles of living actually are. They have become so separated from ordinary people by how many zeros follow the dollar sign that any take, no matter how valid it may be, becomes invalid.

If the opinions by Eilish or Smith were presented to me by a friend, the response I give could have been way different. But with these conversations, taking into consideration who is presenting them is a big factor.

Celebrities are not wrong for caring about social issues, environmentalism or animal rights. However, when they speak on these topics from positions of extreme wealth and privilege, they should recognize that their lifestyles give them opportunities most people simply do not have. Otherwise, their messages risk sounding less inspiring and more disconnected from reality.