

Trinity College Women's Center Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 1

Fall 1997

Forum on Frats: Opinions on Co-Ed Greek Organizations

Co-Ed is Better

As it has done since the mid-80's, Trinity's administration has again mandated that all Greek organizations on campus become co-ed, and that has sent the majority of those organizations scurrying into hiding or grasping for a solution. My own organization, Cleo, is not technically Greek anymore, primarily because it's been co-ed for years. 27 years, actually, and national Greek chapters are not sympathetic to co-education. The frantic and angry attitude of the other organizations at Trinity leaves me a bit bewildered, for while I can identify with the human possessive desire to stay the same, to fight off change, I can't honestly understand their problem with admitting the opposite sex to their ranks.

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Co-Ed Mandate is Sexist

I feel like I have been shafted by the administration. In my time since I became a member of the greek system here at Trinity, I have begun to question the motivations of the administration for their co-educational mandate. Not just because I think it's unfair, but because I think they are based on sexist assumptions and they effectively deny Trinity women the opportunity to self-define their social options.

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Najoice's daughter, Shaija

Greek System Harms Women

The Greek system on Trinity's campus is, by and largely detrimental to the status of women. From the "support groups" of the former sororities (now part of the ostensibly coed organizations) to the meat-shopping boys clubs that are the fraternities, few Greek groups on campus help women in any significant way, and most detract from the success women have had in Trinity's coeducational process over the last 27 years.

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On Being a Student and a Mother

by Najoice Strong

Najoice Strong is a sophomore at Trinity College. As a first year student, she resided in the residence halls from the time she was four months pregnant until she gave birth last spring. Although her daughter, Shaija, lives in New York with Najoice's parents, Najoice goes home every chance she can to spend time with her precious little bundle.

Being a mother while in school has brought many changes into my life. These changes have not been for the worse, but they have changed me as a person. Since I became a mother, I have learned the real meaning of responsibility and commitment. There is a difference between someone depending on you versus only doing things for yourself.

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Contributors:

Rebecca Cole, SarahAnne Cutler,
Najoice Strong, Jenica Rogers

Sisterhood is Global

news from around the world

Feminism in Action for Women in Peru

In their March/April issue, *Ms.* "reported on a rape law in Peru that said if a rapist married his victim, he would not be prosecuted. On March 12, the New York Times ran a front page story on the issue, and on April 4, the Peruvian Congress voted to repeal the law."

Afghan Woman Stoned to Death by Fundamentalists

"The Atlanta Journal reports that in March, Afghanistan's fundamentalist faction known as the Taliban stoned to death a woman, identified only as Jamila, who tried to flee the country with a man who was not her relative. In the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law, a woman found in the company of a man other than a family member is guilty of a crime punishable by stoning. At press time, it was not clear if the unidentified man was punished at all."

-from *Ms.* July/August 1997

Protection Sought for Rape Victims in England's Courts

"Police, MP's and women's groups are pressuring England's Home Secretary Jack Straw to allow rape victims to testify behind a screen and to avoid cross examination about their sex lives... [Following] a report... [t]hat showed rape rates are rising, while rape convictions are de-

creasing. Only 19% of all rape complaints are taken to court, and half of the defendants are later acquitted... Civil liberties groups are protesting such a change, saying that while rape victims should be protected, defendants have the right to confront their accusers in court."

Women in Irish Politics

Mary McAleese was elected to be the next president of Ireland in a race "...unusual for Ireland because four women and only one man ran for the presidency. Although a neon sign on Ireland's City Hall reads "It'd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it," from James Joyce's "Ulysses," women make up less than one-eighth of the lower Parliament, take home 61.3% of men's pay, and are still underrepresented in management positions."

Rape Crises in Europe

"A new study reports that men rape a Romanian woman every six hours, according to the Romanian newspaper, *Adevarul*...

A study commissioned by the German government has found that one in seven women in Germany is raped or sexually harassed in her lifetime, yet only 5% report it to the police."

Anti Discriminatory Laws to be Tested in Hong Kong

"Hong Kong's *Apple Daily* newspaper printed an advertisement for 'several pretty female reporters'

in an apparent violation of the country's new anti-discrimination laws. The new anti-discrimination laws prohibit employers from citing sex, marital status, or lack of disability as a condition of employment, but allow employers to request workers of a specific age or race. The publishers of the popular *Apple Daily* newspaper will be the first organization tried under the new anti-discrimination laws."

-from The Feminist Majority Foundation: *Feminist News*, September and October 1997
<http://www.feminist.org/>

Some Websites on Global Sisterhood:

The Global Fund for Women - international women's human rights:
www.igc.apc.org/gfw

Linkages - info related to the UN conference on the status of women:
www.iisd.ca/linkages/women.html

Russian Feminism Resources -
www.geocities.com/Athens/2533/russfem.html

FemiNet Korea - www.feminet.or.kr

Women of the World - info on women's reproductive freedom in several countries: www.echonyc.com/~jmk/m/wotw

WomenWatch - UN info and data on women worldwide: www.un.org/womenwatch

-links obtained from the Internet Gateway on the Feminist Majority Foundation Homepage at:
www.feminist.org

Forum

Co-Ed is Better *from p. 1*

Think about it this way. Trinity is a co-educational institution, and has been since 1969. Many women chose Trinity because it is co-ed, just as many rejected schools like Vassar and Mount Holyoke because they are not. A Greek organization is a social space constructed to serve a specific purpose, usually one involving community and some parties. Now think about the communities you've been a part of, and parties you've been to—aren't they more fun when the opposite sex is involved? Not for hormonal sexual reasons, but because of the basics of human interaction—in our society men and women mixed make for a more engaging experience. If my circle of friends were all women, I'd be bored. I like men.

There was a time, due to the quirks of open membership, that Cleo's membership was something like 28 women and 9 men. Not the best of ratios; there was a lot of joking about our becoming a sorority and booting out the remaining men while we had the chance. No one took it seriously, and it in fact disturbed us so much that the rallying cry near initiation time was "Find some men!"

Why did we dread the thought of Cleo without men in it? Why do we avoid single sex education? Because life is not made up of groups of women and groups of men. There are institutional facets of modern life that create those single sex spaces—job categories, mothers who stay at home, etc.—but on the whole, life is made up of events in which men and women interact. Single sex spaces aren't the norm; they're not the life

we'll be walking into when we leave Trinity. We all know deep down that the interplay of genders is important, and when we at Cleo were mocking our gender ratio, some of that knowledge was creeping out. We didn't want to lose the reality, the honesty, and the joy of our community of men and women. We didn't want to lose the contribution of half of our identity.

"... I value Cleo not because it gives me a social space supportive to me as woman, but because it gives me a social space supportive to who I am."

Some women will argue that depriving them of single sex organizations deprives them of the right to create a social space supportive to their needs as women. Perhaps they are right, but I value Cleo not because it gives me a social space supportive to me as woman, but because it gives me a social space supportive to who I am. Not to what I am, not to me as a woman, but to who I am, to me as a person. Jenica the person has helped create an environment I am happy in, not Jenica the woman. I'm not denying that my status as a woman affects my life; I simply know that it is not all that I am. I am an intelligent, inquisitive, often judgmental, sometimes silly, woman. If that list ended with 'man,' I would certainly be a different person, but I would still be welcomed into the community I love so much. I have to think that that lack of distinction, that open-mindedness, is important.

That lack of distinction and that implicit equality allows me to be sure of one thing: That if I need to make a stand as a feminist, a stand about women, about our rights, I know that I have support. Not simply support from the group of understanding united women that a sorority would provide, but support from a group of my friends of both sexes, a community of men and women working together and standing behind one another. And when I feel the power of that sort of fellowship, I'm reminded that feminist movements won't amount to anything if they ignore half of the constituency of all gender issues: men. They're out there. We live with them. They add to our lives, and condemning them for existing does nothing for us. Excluding them simply because of what they are, not who they are, also strips us of the resources and support that they can add to our lives, and our organizations. Cleo's gender ratio has evened out in the past year, and I can't help but be relieved. §

"It occurred to me when I was thirteen and wearing white gloves and Mary Janes and going to dance school that no one should have to dance backward all their lives."

*-Jill Ruckelshaus, b. 1937?
American govt. official & lecturer*

Forum

Greek System... from p. 1

Almost all of my girlfriends have pledged the sorority formerly known as Kappa (now part of the coed organization the Columns) our sophomore year. They sang the praises of a women's support group, of a sisterhood, of all their new friends. I have had serious issues with sororities since I first knew what they were about and had no interest in pledging at the time, but all of my friends seemed to be enjoying their experience, so who was I to criticize? Well, I've now witnessed the highs and lows of sororities through my friends experiences over the last two years, and my criticisms have evolved a little. These organizations are supposed to be support groups for women, right? Well, how supportive is it to have rush? If a woman wants to put herself on the line, to give herself to a group, what is to be gained in rejecting her? Someone who wants to be your friend can only help you, not harm you. If sororities are truly a support group, they ought to support everyone who wants to be a part of their group, not just those who wear the "right" clothes and carry themselves the "right" way. I, personally, have a support group in my friends. I don't have to pay dues for these friends, and I can count on them to be there for me. I'm not sure that this is true of the women's organizations at Trinity. I know enough members of the sorority formerly known as Kappa that I am aware of the significant amount of backstabbing that goes on within the organization. I've heard numerous nasty comments about fellow Kappas, and some of my

friends even have "sisters" to whom they do not speak. What kind of support group is this? Pay us dues to make friends, pay us dues to have support and love? Pay us dues to meet cute fraternity boys is what it seems like to me.

These fraternities aren't helping, either. Let's look, for example, at the fraternity formerly known as Psi-U (now the male contingent of the coed Columns). Their late night consists of several kegs and a dark room with loud music. The lights get turned on every few songs, presumably so you can be sure with whom, exactly, you're grinding. You can bet these lights don't get turned on for the girls present. The brothers seem

"If these groups are going to be present on campus, which I think they are for quite awhile, they don't have to take away from the success that women have had in becoming a true part of Trinity's campus".

to need to find just the right piece of meat to hook up with each night. Whether this is their actual feeling toward women at their parties or not, this is the atmosphere of a late night at the Columns or most other fraternity houses at Trinity, and that's a problem. There are a lot of very nice guys in fraternities, but somehow when they're in their bastion of testosterone, they immediately seem highly sketchy to me. Actually, I believe it was at a Columns party my sophomore year when the brothers of

this coed institution wrote "virgin" in the arms of all the freshman girls in attendance. How... um... empowering. Even the pledging process of the male halves of the coed Greek groups on campus are degrading to women. One of these groups is rumored to take its pledges to a brothel. There is also a rumor that this same organization names one woman of supposedly loose moral character every year with whom each of their pledges has to sleep during their pledge period. What kind of attitude does this show toward women? There is something, sadly, about a large group of males getting together that leads to a questionable treatment of women, from quick grabs in a dark basement to full-on sexual assault. We all know about this. Why does it happen, and more importantly, why don't we do something about it?

And then there are the groups that have been fully coed for decades. The Hall is one of these organizations. On the surface, it would seem that women would be equal after being accepted into a group that has welcomed them for years. If this is the case, why are all members of the Hall called brothers? Apparently to be a member of the Hall, women have to check their womanhood at the door. Maleness is, through the use of the word "brothers" to denote all the members of the group, implied to be superior and the norm. I have a hard time believing that women have an equal standing in the Hall if they can't even be called what they are, which is sisters.

Cleo, on the other hand, has had female members for decades as
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Forum

"Remember, no one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Greek System... *continued*

well. All of Cleo's members are called "siblings," and Cleo has had a female president. When I go to parties at Cleo, I do not feel threatened in any way as a female. It is perhaps the only house on this campus that really feels as though it has equality between its members of both sexes. Cleo is never, ever, a meat market. Besides this, Cleo also accepts everyone who wants to be a member of their organization. This is something that I perceive of as a true support group. While I am still opposed to the notion of paying dues for friendship, I can see the merits of a group with the sexual equality that Cleo possesses.

After 27 years of coeducation on Trinity's campus, we have come far enough that the Greek organizations, as they currently exist, are detracting from the strides women have made. If these groups are going to be present on campus, which I think they are for quite awhile, they don't have to take away from the success that women have had in becoming a true part of Trinity's campus. Fraternities, do you like the stereotype that you're meathead sex fiends who can't be trusted? If you don't, do something about it. Turn the lights on at late night. Don't stand in clumps and stare at girls, obviously discussing

them. Sororities, do you like the stereotype that you're vapid, bitchy snobs? If you don't, don't turn potential friends away from your group. Don't backstab. And above all, don't excuse the disgusting animalistic behaviors of your "brothers." If you're going to try to be a support group, really be supportive. It is only through true sister- and brotherhood, both within sororities and without, that women can truly succeed on this campus, and unfortunately, we don't have that right now. §

Mandate is Sexist from p. 1

Perhaps it is unfair to complain since I knew what I was getting into when I joined the greek system here. The administration was clear about its rules for coeducation (sort of, anyway) so I guess I shouldn't be disappointed that I wasn't allowed to join a free-standing sorority, but I am.

When I have asked various administrators and faculty what the motivations for the co-ed mandate were, the general idea I got is that the fraternities were perceived as an excessively negative force in Trinity's social life, a force which was largely to blame for irresponsible behavior ranging from alcohol abuse to sexual assault and were perceived as contributing to a less than academic atmosphere here. But no one ever talked about the sororities as having a negative impact on Trinity in any way. If the goal of the co-ed mandate was to discontinue this sort of behavior, and sororities weren't part of the problem, then this was a move to temper the fraternities by forcing them to bring

in women. I find this idea to be highly offensive because it is based on extremely sexist assumptions and is sexist in effect. (Don't worry, I will explain this in a minute.)

Current undergraduates here at Trinity may not have any idea what the fraternities used to be like, but most have probably heard the horror stories of the good old days when they were unchecked (raging late nights every night of the week, that sort of thing). A friend of mine recently told me of a quote that she read from the

"... the administration decided that eradicating the problem of the fraternities was more important than allowing Trinity's women a social space to call their own."

minutes of a meeting of a campus organization in 1977 that said, "We have to do something about the organized rapes at Crow." Can you imagine? Not to say this is necessarily where the fraternities were four years ago when the co-ed mandate came down, but that's definitely where they came from.

I have never, not even once, heard any horror stories about the sororities of Trinity's past, much less heard someone who was in favor of the co-ed mandate, namely the administration and faculty, even mention the "sorority problem." I think it would be safe to assume that the goal of the mandate was not to reduce the destructive behaviors on the part of the sororities. Perhaps this is reflection.

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Catalyst Study Finds Women of Color Under-Represented in the Managerial Workforce

Mandate is Sexist *from p. 5*
tive of the fact that Trinity's two sororities did not pose a significant problem requiring disciplinary action. If this is true, then why weren't they allowed to continue to exist? It's because the administration decided that eradicating the problem of the fraternities was more important than allowing Trinity's women a social space to call their own. Obviously, you couldn't have it both ways. If the exclusively male social groups are responsible for Trinity's social problems (don't you get the feeling that this is what the administration thinks?) they should not be allowed to continue as they have, and if you don't let the boys play all by themselves, you can't let the girls be exclusive either.

What this point of view ignores are the things which are being denied to Trinity's women. Whatever your views on sororities (they're exclusionary, elitist, conformist, stupid and silly, whatever) it's difficult to dispute that they do in fact create an all-women social space. They create networks of social support, at least for the women who chose to be involved. They provide those women an opportunity to have fun socially with other women in a structured, free environment, specifically because there are no men. On a campus that has only allowed women for the last thirty years, this is exceptionally important. Women here have had to carve out their social possibilities and struggle to make them self-defined. The administration denied those possibilities when they forced all greek organizations to become co-ed. §

New York, October 22, 1997 — Women of color make up 24 percent of the U.S. female workforce, but only 15 percent of women in managerial level positions in the private sector, according to *Women of Color in Corporate Management: A Statistical Picture*, the first quantitative study of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian/Other women managers in the private sector, released by Catalyst today and based on an analysis of U.S. Census data for 1994-5.

African-American women are the most under-represented women-of-color subgroup in private-sector management, according to the report - they comprise slightly more than 12 percent of the female workforce at large but only 7 percent of the 2.9 million women managers in the private sector. Similar but less marked under-representation holds true for the other two subgroups of women of color studied: Hispanics and Asian/Other.

"The reality is that women of color face considerable barriers to full participation in the upper ranks of corporate America," said Sheila Wellington, president of Catalyst, an organization that works to advance women in the workplace. "Catalyst finds that having the figures in hand is always the first step on the road to change."

The report confirms an often assumed wage gap between women of color managers and white women managers, but also reveals a wide gender gap in earnings for private-sector managers. For every dollar white male managers make, white women managers make 59 cents, and women of color, on average, earn two

cents less. The report demonstrates, however, that each women-of-color subgroup occupies a distinctly different level on the pay scale. Asian/Other women earn the highest median weekly earnings of any group of private-sector female managers: \$593. White women managers in the same category earn an average of \$528 and African-American women, \$514. Hispanic women earn considerably less, \$423 a week. The report suggests possible reasons for these rankings: the concentration of women of color in less lucrative industry sectors and professional fields; the incidence of Asian/Other women in higher-paying geographical areas; and the varying educational attainments of each group.

The statistical analysis of census data was prepared by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. In addition to documenting women of color's low representation in management and the management-level earnings data, *Women of Color in Corporate Management: A Statistical Picture* also examines other aspects of private-sector management demographics, such as educational levels, family characteristics, and incidence of foreign birth.

"This is the first time anyone has focused attention on these data," said Katherine Giscombe, Ph. D., the project director for the *Statistical Picture*, as well as for Catalyst's upcoming full-scale national research project, the first to study the career mobility of women of color in corporations, due out in 1998. "It will serve as a benchmark for the business community in their efforts to ensure

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Women of Color in Corporate Management: A Statistical Picture

Key Findings:

All women are under-represented in management but women of color are less well-represented than white women. The 57.8 million women in the workforce are distributed as follows:

White:	77%
Hispanic:	7%
African-American:	12%
Asian/Others:	4%

The 2.9 million women who hold managerial and administrative positions in the private sector:

White:	86%
Hispanic:	5%
African-American:	7%
Asian/Others:	3%

Median weekly pay of women managers in the private sector by subgroup:

Asian/Others:	\$593
African-American:	\$514
White:	\$528
Hispanic:	\$423

Earnings:

Here's how the earnings of each subgroup of managers compares to each \$1.00 earned by white male managers:

White women:	59 cents
Asian/Other women:	67 cents
Asian/Other males:	91 cents
African-American women:	58 cents
African-American males:	65 cents
Hispanic women:	48 cents
Hispanic males:	65 cents

Each subgroup of women makes less than her male counterpart.

Education: 48% of Asian/Other women have attained college or advanced degrees, the highest education of all women managers. African-American women managers have the next highest incidence of college degrees (39%), yet earn less than white women managers. African-American women have higher educational attainment than African-American men, a situation unique to this subgroup.

Foreign born status: Women of

color managers, particularly Asian/Other and Hispanic, are more likely than white women managers to have been born outside the U.S. But 45% of Asian/Other women managers were born in the U.S., as were 67% of Hispanic women managers.

Family: In every subgroup, women managers are more likely to be single parents than are male managers. 22% of African-American women managers are unmarried and have children under 18, compared to 15% of Hispanic, 8% of white, and 5% of Asian/Other women managers.

Women in Senior Management: According to *Women in Corporate Leadership: Progress and Prospects*, a Catalyst survey of women senior managers: [A]verage compensation for women of color senior managers is \$229,000, compared to \$250,000 for white women. 46% of women of color respondents pointed to "lack of mentoring" as a barrier to their advancement, while only 29% of white respondents named that factor. §

Catalyst Study from p. 6

fairness and equality of opportunity." The two year study is funded by the Ford Foundation and a consortium of 17 major companies. Catalyst is the nonprofit research and advisory organization that works to enable women in business and the professions to achieve their maximum potential and to help corporation and firms capitalize in the talents of women. This report was funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

If you have any questions or would like to request additional information, please contact Carrie M. Lane at (212) 514-7600 ext. 303, or at clane@catalystwomen.org. §

Study Abroad Opportunity

with the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College

Gender and Development in Mexico, Central America & Southern Africa

information is available in the Women's Center for students who are interested in this program or by contacting the Center directly

The Center for Global Education
Augsburg College
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454
612/330/1159
1-800-299-8889
email: gloaled@augsgburg.edu
<http://www.augsgburg.edu/global>

"On Being a Student & Mother" from front page

When I was younger, my dream was to become an obstetrician. However, when I found out that I was pregnant, many people thought that I would not be able to accomplish that goal, though I never doubted it myself. I know that my situation is not going to make things easier but it does not make my goals unreachable.

Getting an education is the best thing that I can do for my daughter. I want to be able to show her that even though there are obstacles in life a goal can always be reached.

Although I am aware of these issues, I know I will still have to make a lot of sacrifices. However, before my daughter was born, I knew many aspects of my life would change. The more I think of it, these changes have occurred because of the changes I made. I do not go out when I am home because I want to be with my daughter as opposed to not being able to. I am realizing that I am maturing because I know that someone is relying on me.

The way I spend my money and time will affect my daughter. No matter what struggle or obstacle I face, I will never regret having my daughter. The entire experience of being a mother cannot be replaced. As soon as situations become difficult, all I have to do is look at my daughter and realize why I do the things I do. §

The next issue of the Women's Center Newsletter will feature a forum discussion on **Controversies within Women's Studies and the feminist movement**

If you would like to contribute, please contact SarahAnne at x3084

Women's Organizations and Resources

Please note: this list is by no means exhaustive. If you have an organization you would like to have listed in the next issue of the newsletter, please contact the Women's Center.

Bi/Lesbian Women's Group
contact x2408

Cheerleading
Charity Elder x2991

Collective Voices
Sara Getman x2921

La Voz Latina (LVL)
Rachel Rivera x3092

Redefining Ideal Beauty Standards (RIBS)
Erin Christiano x3524 or Jannine Huth x6655

Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF)
Cari Salisbury x3444

Society of Women Engineers
Kirsten Tulchin x2814

The Trinitones
Amie Duffy x3265

Trinity College Black Women's Organization (TCBWO)
Natalie LeBlanc x2749

Trinity Women's Organization (TWO)
Jen Joseph x3474

The Women's Center
on the 2nd floor of Mather
contact: Diane Martell, director x2408