

Sorority Stereotypes Take Center Stage

Sophia Kirschenman
National News Reporter

Controversy struck at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana after 23 of the 35 members of the campus' chapter of the Delta Zeta sorority were asked by the national officers to leave the sorority. Among the 23 asked to leave, all were either Korean, Vietnamese, black or overweight.

After a psychology professor at the university conducted an annual survey of students regarding the sororities on campus, she found that Delta Zeta was considered the most "socially awkward" sorority on campus.

Delta Zeta's national officers, concerned that the stereotype was unappealing to prospective sorority members, interviewed all of the chapter's members, making them explain how dedicated they were to recruiting new members. On Dec. 2, the officers declared that 23 of the members were not dedicated enough to recruitment efforts and would therefore be asked to leave the sorority.

Immediately, students began protesting the move, and livid parents sent letters expressing their disgust, while faculty members signed a petition stating that Delta Zeta's actions were immoral.

Bob Hershberger, professor and chair of the department of modern languages at DePauw, began the petition because he believed the sorority's move was dishonorable.

"As faculty, I simply couldn't imagine ourselves talking about ethical issues without having first addressed this issue that is literally in our own backyard," Hershberger wrote in an e-mail to *City on a*

Hill Press (CHP). "I hope this situation will mark a watershed moment for change in the Greek system, both here at DePauw and throughout the nation. It's time that we live in 2007 rather than 1940."

The Delta Zeta national officers, however, maintain that the action was due to what they perceived as a lack of dedication to recruitment on the part of the excused members. They furthermore state that race and appearance did not cause them to evict the girls.

In a statement released on Feb. 26, Delta Zeta Executive Director Cynthia Menges attempted to explain the situation at DePauw.

"In the process of addressing that situation, we misjudged how some of our communications would be received by our members, and we regret that," Menges said. "Delta Zeta finds it offensive that recent reports have suggested that decisions made at DePauw University were related in any way to our members' races and nationalities."

In a response to the faculty petition and other public opinion on the campus, Robert Bottoms, president of DePauw University, wrote a letter to Deborah Raziano, national president of the Delta Zeta sorority, discussing the actions.

"As to Delta Zeta's future at DePauw... the national organization is considering its options including closing for a period of time with some promise of being able to re-colonize in the future," Bottoms said. "Under the circumstances we are not prepared to make such a guarantee."

Some of the members who were evicted from the sorority experienced extreme personal hardships and considered this



Adam Rosendahl | CHP

an attack on their self-esteem. Several even dropped their classes because they experienced depression. Out of the 12 remaining Delta Zeta members at DePauw, six resigned, citing the events as unethical.

Rachel Pappas, former secretary and one of the six members who chose to voluntarily remove herself from the sorority, called for an informal discussion on Feb. 6 to notify the rest of the campus about the Delta Zeta battle. She posted 200 fliers and an estimated 50 students attended the discussion. She feels that the Delta Zeta

chapter at DePauw should be removed and she wanted the students to get first-hand input on the Delta Zeta occurrences.

"An incredibly important component of this entire incident is that it speaks volumes about what we as a society perceive the space of femininity to be," Pappas said in an interview with *CHP*. "By making women of Delta Zeta into alumnae based on what appeared to me to be superficial reasons, the national sorority condoned and even participated in furthering the stereotypes that damage all women today."

Black Leaders Oppose Virginia's Slavery Apology

Virginia legislation's apology for slavery seen by many blacks as too little, too late

Daniel Zarchy
National News Reporter

Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation, and 144 years later, the Virginia legislature is trying to echo those sentiments by expressing its own regrets.

The apology for slavery, officially passed through the Virginia state legislature last Sunday, came on the 400-year anniversary of the settlement of the historic colonial settlement in Jamestown, VA.

Domestically, the apology has garnered mixed reviews from the black community.

Reverend Jesse Lee Peterson, founder of the Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny (BOND), an African-American group which aims to "Rebuild the Family

by Rebuilding the Man," feels strongly that this apology was a step in the wrong direction.

"It was ridiculous, unnecessary, and they're going to regret that they did that, and it's not going to solve any problems in the black community," Peterson said. "It's going to open up the doors even more so for this reparation movement. Reparations are one of the worst things that could happen to us in this country."

The apology is the first of its kind in the United States and comes after a long history of debate over the appropriateness of an admission of guilt for acts carried out over a century ago.

Former president Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush came close to apologizing for slavery during their respective presidential trips to Africa, officially condemning the slave trade but falling short of a literal apology.

The European Union has also proposed a formal apology for race-based slavery in 2001, but it did not pass.

Project 21, The National Leadership Network of Black Conservatives, holds the belief that black Americans should take responsibility for their own lives, and that an apology or reparations may provide a crutch for blacks to lean on instead of taking personal responsibility.

"Blacks will always have the opportunity to say that it's because they're black. They will always have the opportunity to blame someone other than themselves," said Mychal Massie, chairman of Project 21. "It is time to stop living in the past and start embracing the opportunities of today and the future."

In addition, Massie emphasized that slavery was not illegal at the time, and that those who owned slaves were not breaking the law.

"America did not invent slavery," Massie said. "America had the good sense to abolish slavery, even as it continues in other places in the world. We can abhor the immorality of whites owning blacks, but no laws were broken."

Sequilla Lee, a member of the African/Black Student Alliance (A/BSA) at UC Santa Cruz, felt that the worst part about the apology was simply that it took so long for Americans to admit to the horrors of slavery.

"I think that the apology is not valid. There have been a number of things that say that the African-American community should get over slavery, and I think this is one of those things," Lee said. "I'm not saying that people should get over, or forget the past, but that we should take steps forward. To blame someone else is not the positive way to spread the history."