

# Mythbusters: Greek Life

## An in-depth look at challenges that face modern day Greeks.

Throughout the years, there have been many myths that have surrounded the Greek community. These myths have transformed themselves into stigmas that falsely advertise and harm Greeks. It's easy to see how these myths have evolved. Decades ago, there was a very different model for Greek life. This model can very classically be seen in such films as Animal House, Old School, or Sorority Boys. As time has gone by, the model for Greek life has changed, but the way that we are viewed is not. I would like to take the time here to address some of the myths that affect the Greek community one by one.

**MYTH 1:** Being of a different race, religion, or sexual orientation than other members in a Greek Chapter is not what we look for in a member.

**FACT:** Diversity one of IIT's best qualities and it definitely shows in the Greek Community. No chapter on IIT's campus discriminates based on race, religion, or sexual orientation. The truth is that many chapters celebrate that they are diverse and tolerant of everyone. Our definition of brotherhood and sisterhood transcends discrimination. Brotherhood and sisterhood is about bonding with a group of your peers who share the same values, principles, and qualities. It is something that everyone shares, regardless of color, creed, or culture. Diversity within our chapters helps to continuously develop new and innovative ways of doing things. I would like to use the members of Phi Kappa Sigma as an example. Combining Sausagefest with The Big Event is something that had not been done in the past, and through hard work and new ideas, this was able to happen.



### MYTH 2:

Greeks are wild partiers that freely partake in drugs and alcohol, with ill regard to the consequences of their abuse.

**FACT:** Greeks spend more time talking about drug and alcohol use and abuse than almost every other organization combined. Because of this, Greeks understand the effects of drugs and alcohol on the human body better than the average student. This also ensures that Greeks treat alcohol with more respect than the average student.

Every year, there are alcohol seminars talking about how to safely act around and enjoy alcohol. In the past year, there have been at least three. Because of the correlation between alcohol and sexual assault, some chapters are required by their National Offices to have a sexual assault seminar every year as well. At every registered alcoholic social event, there are bar monitors, door guards, bathroom monitors, and roamers. All of these security positions are sober for the entire night, and most of them are TIPS trained. TIPS is an alcohol awareness program designed to teach how to identify people that are abusing alcohol and make sure they are safe. TIPS also teaches peer mediation techniques so that individuals can quickly and peacefully resolve conflicts. For the past year, the Greek community has taken huge strides to make more of our members TIPS trained than ever before. By the end of this semester, more than 70 undergraduate Greeks will be TIPS trained. This is in addition to all of the Greeks TIPS trained previously. Along with the 70 undergraduates, alumni from almost every chapter will also be TIPS trained. Clearly, when it comes to drugs and alcohol, Greeks go out of their way to be safe.

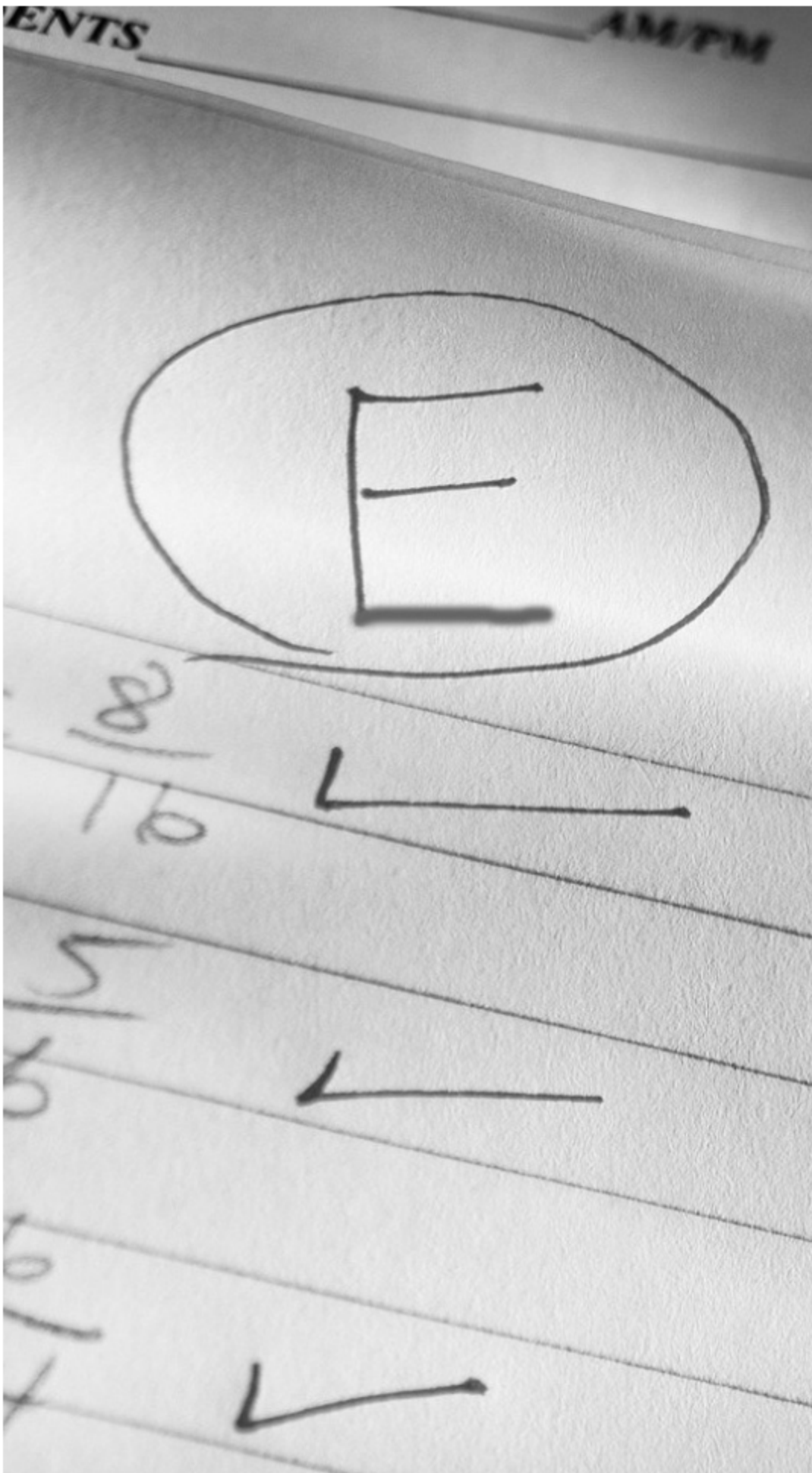


### MYTH 3:

When it comes to academics, Greeks know that they don't need to excel to get a job.

**FACT:** Academics come first no matter the chapter. Along with all of the other responsibilities that come with membership, academic achievement is heavily stressed.

Each chapter demands academic excellence in different ways. Many chapters have a grade requirement for good standing. The usual requirement is around a 2.5 cumulative GPA, though the actual requirement will differ from chapter to chapter. Many chapters also have policies set in place for promoting an academic atmosphere. For example, there are quiet hours in the Delt House from 7:00pm until 9:00pm every night from Sunday until Thursday. Members compete against each other in an academic draft every semester. Last semester, three teams competed for the overall highest GPA. This semester we also created a points system to measure how individuals are doing the right things to succeed. Members can earn points for studying, going to every class, and attending special lectures or seminars, to name a few. This points system helps to inspire members to compete against each other academically, as well as track their own progress. For those members that are struggling, our Director of Academic Affairs (DAA) sits down with these members every week and helps them to get organized, find resources, and make a plan of attack for the week. These measures help to keep those that are academically strong focused, and those that are struggling to get back on the right track.



**MYTH 4:** As Greeks, we serve our own community every day. Helping other communities is not our priority.

**FACT:** Greeks are heavily involved all around campus. It is very hard to go anywhere and not find a Greek working, playing, or involving them in something.

I like to think that as a Greek Community, our involvement is our greatest strength. The Greek community has members that are involved in professional and honor societies, varsity and intramural athletics, support and awareness organizations, and programming organizations. Many Greeks are involved in Student Government and Union Board, organizations that bring the IIT community together in a number of ways. Both of these organizations have had Greeks as their president in the past year.

When it comes to service, Greeks try to always do their part. Community Service is something required of every Greek. Different chapters require different amounts of community service, and some have regular communities that they serve, but the message is always the same: help out and do your part, whatever it may be. Days of Service have a strong Greek presence. The Big Event had an extremely large Greek attendance; there were Greeks at every location. This, along with the hundreds of hours of service that each chapter puts in every semester should describe Greek commitment to the other communities we are a part of.

I understand that while these myths may not affect the Greek community at IIT as much as they affect the Greeks at other campuses, it is still a real issue. If you would like to know more, feel free to contact the Greek Council President Dan Kelly at [president@iitgreek.com](mailto:president@iitgreek.com).



A line of sandwich makers hard at work for Greeks Feed the Homeless 2010. Photo courtesy of Delta Tau Delta.

**MYTH 5:** Hazing is a common occurrence in the Greek Community. It is completely normal and just part of the process.

**FACT:** Like any organization at IIT, hazing is absolutely prohibited. All of IIT's Greek chapters abide by this rule, and there haven't been any instances of hazing found for as long as any Greek here can remember.

Hazing is largely a thing of the past. It was very alive in the 80's and 90's when involvement followed an older method of Greek Life. It was based around seniority, tradition, and the idea that "If I had to do it, so do they." There was also a strong mindset that hazing made better members. Nowadays, this is not a sustainable model for Fraternity living. In order to remain strong and diverse organizations, organizations based around moral and ethical principles that create leaders and successful members of society, hazing cannot exist. Also, through the development of new member education programs that motivate new members to be involved and succeed in all of their endeavors, the need for hazing to make good members has vanished.

Hazing has multiple definitions, but Greeks use this one: Hazing is anything that causes mental or physical distress upon a person or group of people. This definition allows for many things to be considered as such, and this is also why Greeks take hazing so seriously. For example, the women of Alpha Sigma Alpha take many precautions to make sure that they do not haze. There is no pledging period for ASA. Instead, there is a Phoenix Ceremony and then new members are treated as equals to older members. Any event that is required of new members is required of older members as well. This helps to illustrate how hazing is treated on IIT's campus.

Although the Greek Community does not support hazing, this is not to say that hazing doesn't exist. There are still instances of hazing around the country on college campuses. Although these instances are much more infrequent than they used to be, they are looked at with more seriousness than ever before. I am a member of Delta Tau Delta, and in the past two years I have seen two Delt chapters shut down for hazing. I am ashamed to say that I am brothers with those people. I feel more offended at the thought of hazing than I did before I joined my Fraternity, and I believe this sentiment to be shared by any Greek.