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Drinks, Hijinks, and Policy Change: Fraternities at Gettysburg College in the Haaland Years (1990-2004)

Abstract

This paper establishes what the fraternity structure was like at Gettysburg College during Gordon Haaland's presidency. Between 1990 and 2004, we explore the roaring party dynamic that was continually threatened by the administration and examine how the switch to sophomore rush tried to tame it. With testimonies from fraternity brothers during this era we try to capture the good, bad, and ugly of fraternity life. While Haaland's administration did not get ride of the fraternity system, it certainly made it safer and reigned it in significantly.

Keywords

Haaland Presidency, Fraternities, Sophomore rush, 1990-2004

Disciplines

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Drinks, Hijinks, and Policy Change: Gettysburg College Fraternities under the Presidency of
Gordon Haaland (1990—2004)

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May 1, 2019

The year is 1994. It's a Friday night at Gettysburg College and you and your friends are looking for something to do. Wandering past Plank Gym where the Post Office is, you and your group inspect the strung-up, spray-painted bedsheets on the building advertising different parties hosted by fraternities for the weekend. As you peruse your options, one of your senior friends is reminiscing about how much fun she used to have dancing in Sigma Alpha Elipson's (SAE) basement before they were kicked off of campus in 1992. After taking a look at the possibilities, you head to Servo for a quick dinner, passing some Alpha Tau Omega (ATO) brothers who are throwing around a football on the lawn. Later in the night, you guys get together to pregame before you go out, drinking and jamming out to your *Boyz II Men* CD. Around midnight you head to the fraternities, hanging out with your lacrosse playing friends at Tau Kappa Elipson (TKE) and stopping in to play Beriut, a beer pong game with your friends at Theta Chi. You stay a little longer at Phi Gamma Delta (FIJI)—the brothers are a little too preppy for your taste, but they have a live band and more than enough alcohol to go around. Winding up your night, you and your friends head to *Pizza House* for a late-night snack. The next morning at breakfast, you excitedly swap drunken tales of your night and plan to go to FIJI's deck party at noon.

This creative imagining of a weekend is based on dozens of email interviews conducted with Gettysburg alumni who attended the college between 1990 and 2004, the years of the presidency of Gordon Haaland. Coupled with information gleaned from student publications, interviews with faculty, and the papers of Gordon Haaland, these alumni responses provide a full picture of the culture and actions of Greek life during the Haaland era. According to all the information gathered, it appears that drinks, hijinks, and more than a little rule-breaking characterize Gettysburg fraternity culture in the years of Gordon Haaland's presidency. However, the Haaland presidency heralded the arrival of new policies regarding college control

of fraternity houses, a transition to sophomore rush, and the implementation of new programs that provided Greek life social alternatives. While none killed or radically changed the culture of Greek life on campus, these policies assisted in the transition from the *Animal House*-esque 1980s to the much milder but still rowdy scene of today. This project serves to provide an overview of fraternity life and the policies that affected it during the Haaland presidency.

Haaland's Background:

To begin the discussion on Greek life during the Haaland years, it is appropriate to introduce the man who oversaw it all. With a unanimous board decision in December 1989, Gordon Haaland, was named the 12th president of Gettysburg College.¹ Trained as a social psychologist, Haaland attended Wheaton College for his undergraduate degree and then earned his doctorate at the State University of New York at Buffalo.² When he arrived at Gettysburg, Haaland was no stranger to higher education. Before his years at the College, Haaland taught at the University of New Hampshire, was Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Maine, and served as President of the University of New Hampshire for seven years. Moving from a large, public university to a small liberal arts college, Haaland had a vision for his new administration. He was excited about the “smallness of Gettysburg,” and the prospect of “getting to know and work closely with students and faculty.”³ President Haaland would hold the position from 1990 to 2004. Overall, President Haaland had a positive influence on the college and, in a lot of aspects, he made the College what it is today. Haaland improved the college academically by increasing the size of the student body by twenty percent, increasing diversity in the student body, adding new departments, creating new major and minor programs, and expanding study

¹ Matthew Petrillo, “Takes Office on March 30, Haaland Officially Named President,” *The Gettysburgian*, December 6, 1989.

² *Spectrum*, 1990, 143.

³ *Ibid.*

abroad opportunities.⁴ These improvements made Gettysburg College a more selective institution, pushing the college into its current top-tier status.⁵ Gettysburg College would not be the institution that it is today without Haaland's vision.

While Haaland personally had a great impact on campus, much of his successes and changes can be attributed to his strong, trustworthy staff who saw a lot of the projects through. He was perhaps a better delegator than a doer. Many students and faculty from his tenure remember his lack presence on campus. Mike Malewicki, the chief Financial director for a portion of Haaland's tenure, stated in an interview with the authors that, "Gordon was a smart, nice, fun guy, but he could have done so much more—he did a lot, but he had time to play golf. I think he saw this [Gettysburg College] as a place that was solid and stable. [A place] he could add value to, and he did all of those things."⁶ Though his presidency was more hands-off, he did care for and improve Gettysburg College efficiently. The following pages serve to paint a picture of the situation Haaland encountered and the effects the policies of his administration had on the college.

Greek Life Before the Haaland Administration:

In order to contextualize Greek life and the changes it underwent during the presidency of Gordon Haaland, it is essential to set the stage with a description of Greek life at Gettysburg in the pre-Haaland era. According to every account given by alumni of that era, Greek life in the years leading up to Haaland's presidency was not dissimilar from the classic film *Animal House*. Stories of motorcycles driven down the steps of fraternity houses, snowball brawls between

⁴ Gettysburg College, "College mourns the loss of President Emeritus Gordon Haaland," Date accessed April 25, 2019, <https://www.gettysburg.edu/news/stories?id=a328edbc-fc8c-40d9-a21c-4197aa2c5261&pageTitle=College+mourns+the+loss+of+President+Emeritus+Gordon+Haaland>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mike Malewicki, interviewed by authors, April 24, 2019.

fraternities, and Wednesday ragers from twelve to three A.M. demonstrate the absolute mayhem that was fraternity culture at Gettysburg. One FIJI brother who graduated in 1989 told the authors how one fraternity would hold a blowout Christmas party every year, decorated with items stolen from the yards of Gettysburg residents. The brothers would black out the windows of their house so that no one could see the stolen decorations inside. One year, someone got the idea to decorate the first floor with Christmas trees. Around the same time, a large number of pine trees disappeared from the yard of the President's house—a total coincidence, of course...⁷ It was this kind of Fraternity mischief—some of it more harmful than stolen decorations—that confronted President Haaland upon his arrival in Gettysburg.

Fraternities in the pre-Haaland era had a great deal of free-reign on campus that made possible the blow-out parties and hazing reminiscent of *Animal House*. When asked whether or not this comparison was an accurate one, the FIJI brother recounted some of his wildest stories from his years here. In one story, he remembers one of the more active rivalries between fraternities, a rivalry between FIJI and Phi Kappa Psi (Phi Psi).

In the winter of my sophomore year, what started out as a small matter of theft (Fiji ran out of kegs during a party and sent their pledge class to go “borrow” some from the beer locker inside the Phi Psi house at around 3 am to keep the party going) ended in a large scale snowball fight and brawl the following day during lunch. Upset over the break in, a Phi Psi brother threw a snow ball at the Fiji house [...] the snowball hit a window on the main floor and shattered it. The result was an outpouring of brothers who chased the assailant back to his house and began breaking the windows out of their frat. A large-scale brawl ensued (watched by faculty, campus police and townspeople) lasting about 30 minutes. Snowballs were soon replaced by punches. I’m guessing 80-100 students were involved.⁸

The fight was stopped by a serious eye injury sustained by one of the Phi Psi brothers. Though the fight stopped, the rivalry continued, escalating to the point that “brothers from the respective

⁷ Anonymous, '89, email interview with authors, April 23, 2019.

⁸ Anonymous, '89, email interview with authors, April 28, 2019.

houses were not welcome or necessarily safe in the other's." He says the rivalry continued for the rest of his Gettysburg years and was "eerily reminiscent of the rift between the ROTC students [and] Niedermeyer and the Delta house in *Animal House*."⁹

Continuing the comparison, he related a story regarding the practice of hazing. According to his and other accounts, it seems that hazing was a regular practice in the pre-Haalad era. He says,

Hazing was frowned upon (and technically illegal) back then just as it is today. However, in the eighties I would say the policy was to generally look the other way, except one or twice a year when something so public or outrageous happened that the school would try to send a message to the Greek community by punishing one Greek organization or another. The drunken disorderly stuff was so routine that it wasn't enough to garnish a rebuke from the school, but when the physical evidence lingered...well that often led to some sort of a hearing and punishment. One example was a young man who was either rushing or pledging [...] FIJI [who] during one party, got so obnoxiously drunk [that] some brothers decided to make an example of him. Now, this sounds kinda[sic] stupid as I type it, but here it goes—when the young man passed out, they shaved his eyebrows off. Completely. [...] professors questioned him about his appearance and he mistakenly told the truth. What followed was very reminiscent of the trial scene in [*Animal House*] where one by one brothers were brought in to testify to deans and student conduct review boards trying to get at the truth behind the removal of his eyebrows. Unfortunately, the victim had no "memory" of the event, so it became nothing more than a large scandal with nothing more than circumstantial evidence of the assault (or at least circumstantial about where or who might have committed it). In the end a punishment of social probably (I believe it was for two weeks or a month) was levied against the fraternity without any concrete evidence or conclusion who did it. It was, at least in my memory, the first significant attempt of the college to crack down on the physical abuses associated with hazing—largely symbolic, as it had no real lasting effect, but the first time I could recall they simply didn't turn a blind eye to the widespread practice.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Fraternalities had been challenging College policy long before Haaland, and they did not stop when he took office. Chronically poor behavior of fraternalities had occasioned the discussion of the future of certain fraternalities on campus and the removal of Greek life altogether. For example, in a January 11, 1996 letter, Dean Julie Ramsey wrote William Metzger, Executive Vice President and CEO of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity (TKE) expressing her concern for the future of Gettysburg's Psi chapter of TKE on campus. Ramsey cited a long string of college policy violations that TKE had committed, including a "'hotel party' which resulted in four first year students' admission to the hospital for alcohol poisoning."¹¹ This "hotel party" had occurred eight years prior to Ramsey's letter. Additionally, she cited more recent violations of BYOB policies and the poor academic performance of TKE members as reasons for the potential removal of TKE from campus.¹²

Disciplinary Issues:

It seems that Dean Ramsey's concerns were not misplaced, for on May 8th and 9th, 1997, TKE brothers, knowing that their house was soon to be renovated, trashed their chapter house and yard, causing severe damage to the property. This action, a piggish disregard of their privilege, led to the administration closing the fraternity for at least the 1997 fall semester and possibly the whole year.¹³ The students took notice of this blatant disrespect of property. An Alpha Delta Xi sorority member who graduated in 2000 remembered this incident and told the authors in an email interview that TKE "trashed everything to epic proportions. There were

¹¹ A hotel party is a party wherein guests go from room to room, taking a different kind of drink that is presented in each room. These types of parties usually lead to the overconsumption of alcohol as people binge drink attempting to try each drink in each room.

¹² Julie Ramsey to William Metzger, January 11, 1996, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, Gettysburg College Archives (hereafter GCA).

¹³ Gordon Haaland to Terry Thoman, July 15, 1997, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

couches in the street.”¹⁴ The gross entitlement that the actions of these TKE brothers implied was one of the administration’s biggest issues with fraternities. However, it was hard to enforce punishments on a system so firmly rooted in the College’s history and culture, and Haaland was put in a tough position whenever dealing with disciplinary infractions.

In 1992, Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity (SAE) was suspended from campus for a 4-year period for an alcohol violation during formal rush.¹⁵ Though SAE was slated to recolonize in 1996, brothers on campus in 1993 were behaving inappropriately, stirring the pot by cockily claiming that they would be “coming back soon.”¹⁶ Additionally, SAE brothers had formed an underground organization that called themselves the “Lions” and had recruited a pledge class of twenty-one people.¹⁷ This behavior led President Haaland to threaten to extend the suspension. However, Haaland received a bit of pushback on this motion from the alumni of SAE who were displeased at the prospect of losing their fraternity house for several more years. A series of letters from Haaland to Wayne Hasenbalg, an alumnus of SAE who was involved with the organization outline the back-and-forth that resulted from this decision. Hasenbalg and his fellow SAE alumni pushed for the re-opening of the house even as Haaland asked them to “make no plans to renovate the house or reopen it for any purpose without consulting me further.”¹⁸

It is essential to understand why it was so important to Haaland and his administration to halt this behavior of SAE, particularly the formation of the underground “Lions.” The whole idea behind suspending a fraternity and recolonizing it in four years is to start fresh—if the trouble-makers are cycled out of the college, it is possible to change the culture of the fraternity.

¹⁴ Anonymous, ’00, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

¹⁵ Gordon Haaland to Wayne Hasenbalg, February 20, 1995, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

¹⁶ Thomas Dombrowsky to Wayne Hasenbalg, November 23, 1993, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

¹⁷ Gordon Haaland to Wayne Hasenbalg, April 8, 1994, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

¹⁸ Ibid.

However, when underground groups form, the trouble-making members of the fraternity maintain the problematic culture and then when recolonization happens, nothing of the culture is altered. Haaland especially wanted to prevent SAE from doing this—because they had already done it once. In 1979, SAE was suspended from campus because of what the *Gettysburgian* reported to be “‘sexual abuse’ of a freshman student.” President Charles Glassick, Haaland’s predecessor, sentenced the chapter to a three-year suspension, a sentence that was truthfully not severe enough.¹⁹ When they returned in the fall of 1982, the base of their membership was apparently formed by a group of brothers that had continued underground.²⁰ Haaland did not want this to happen again in 1996. However, though his intentions were noble, the financial power of the board of trustees eventually trumped the President’s desire for a healthier Greek community.

Hasenbalg and the alumni of SAE were less than cooperative when it came to the possibility of an extension. Hasenbalg was quoted in the *Gettysburgian* claiming that the College was “‘trying to push the problem onto us.’” In the same article, Frank Ginoccio, Director of Chapter Operations for SAE Nationals expressed his displeasure, saying “‘We have no control over underground organizations,’” a statement that was intended to protest what he believed to be the unfairness of the College’s threat.²¹ The whining of alumni and SAE Nationals ended up being effective. Though some stipulations were put in place—the requirements that the fraternity be substance-free, admit no members are from the “Lions,” and mandate a 2.5 GPA—they were ultimately for show as what one disappointed alumnus called “‘everyone’s favorite collection of dead white males, the Gettysburg College Board of Trustees’” won.²² No one was fooled by

¹⁹ “Glassick Confirms Board; SAE Suspended for 3 Years,” *The Gettysburgian*, March 21, 1979.

²⁰ Gordon Haaland to Wayne Hasenbalg, December 6, 1994, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

²¹ Will Siss, “President considers extension of SAE suspension,” the *Gettysburgian*, April 28, 1994.

²² Daniel Barrett, “Letter to the editor: SAE return is too easy: alumnus,” *The Gettysburgian*, February 1, 1996.

supposed changes required and SAE proceeded much as it had in the past. Though the house was not recolonized until around 1999, the SAE alumni and Nationals were permitted to renovate the house “for the benefit of SAE alumni only” so that they could use it for Alumni Weekend and gatherings of that sort.²³ Additionally, even though SAE was not living in the chapter house during this time, many members resided in “Za House” the SAE-owned home attached to the *Pizza House* restaurant on the corner of Washington St. and W. Lincoln Ave.²⁴ Despite President Haaland’s efforts to maintain control of the fraternities, it was ultimately the Board of Trustees and fraternity alumni who controlled the purse-strings and subsequently the decisions of the College regarding fraternities. Haaland and his administration began to think of alternative solutions to control Greek life on campus, particularly Greek control of living spaces.

Changes to Fraternity Houses:

During Haaland’s administration one of the priorities in regard to Greek life was to renovate fraternity houses. By making the houses livable and safe, Haaland was able to control another aspect of Greek life. Haaland explained this in a 2014 interview conducted by Michael Birkner, saying,

What we did [was] create a loan program at low cost or no cost that the fraternity had to sign on to. We gave them a standard to which they had to bring their house, and we worked with them. We hired someone who worked with each house on the renovations that needed to be made to bring it up to code. We provided the support for that; we had our own people do some of the work. The deal was that they borrowed this money, and they owed it back to the college, and they could pay it back on fairly generous terms long-term. If they failed to do that, ownership reverted to the college.²⁵

²³ Wayne Hasenbalg to Gordon Haaland, July 22, 1994, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

²⁴ Amy Lucadamo, '00, conversation with Lindsay Richwine, April 26, 2019.

²⁵ Interview of Gordon Haaland conducted by Michael Birkner, September 19, 2014, Gettysburg College Archives, 32.

This policy built onto already existing restrictions. In 1990 the College put out a “Standards and Expectations” document that all Greek organizations had to sign in order to remain recognized by the College. In this document, Gettysburg College was able to do a few things at once.²⁶ First, it forced the fraternity houses to improve their standard of living. Second, it forced the fraternity houses to maintain these standards. Third, it gave the College leverage later on to potentially buy out the houses. In regard to the first two, these changes meant that the fraternity houses had to bring their systems up to code and make the houses livable and safe. For example, ATO’s house changed dramatically under these new regulations. In 1993 the brothers of ATO moved back into a their newly renovated house after the first stage of a \$350,000 renovation was completed over the summer, paid for in part by alumni donations, and fraternity fundraising, as well as by \$50,000 worth of loans from the College’s loan program.²⁷

This was not the last effort to monitor fraternity activity through control of the houses. In 2004, at the tail end of Haaland’s presidency, the College began the process of acquiring college houses. Scared by fires at other universities that had resulted in loss of student life, the College decided to mandate higher standards for safety in a policy called the “Life-Safety Initiative.” These higher standards included the implementation of up-to-code fire safety precautions such as smoke detectors and sprinklers in all College buildings, including fraternities. At this point, many of the fraternities were not owned by the College so in order to implement these changes the College gave fraternities two options: pay for the renovations yourself or transfer ownership of the fraternity house to the College and the College would pay for the renovations.²⁸ Many of

²⁶ Scott Webster, “Calling for a ‘Visible System,’” *The Gettysburgian*, January 24, 1990.

²⁷ Diane C. Bohn, “ATO Unveils Renovated Quarters,” *The Gettysburgian*, September 2, 1993.

²⁸ “Questions and Answers Describing the Life-Safety Initiative,” *Papers of Mike Malewicki*, unprocessed collection, GCA.

the houses fell under College ownership as a result of this policy, allowing the College more control over the state of and activities in the fraternity houses.

The Change to Sophomore Year Rush:

While controlling housing was one way in which the Haaland administration curtailed the extreme power of Greek life on campus, another one of these solutions was the process of moving rush from the second semester of the first year, where it had been for years, to sophomore year. This change required a great deal of effort on the part of Haaland and his administration as they went through the process of convincing the Board of Trustees—a mostly Greek board who had all rushed in their first year—that this would improve the campus culture. Despite the obvious problems with the conduct of fraternities and the changes that needed to be made in the Haaland realized that he had to tread carefully when dealing with them as Greek life formed, as it does today, an integral part of campus culture. For one thing, Greek life nearly consumed the campus in this era. According to alumni estimates collected in email interviews, it seems that roughly 90% of the campus was involved in Greek life during this era.²⁹ According to Haaland, the actual number was closer to 70% but the fact that the numbers were perceived to be higher is a testament to the prevalence of Greek life on campus.³⁰ It was an important part of campus life, more so even than today, where Greek life plays a large part in campus social life even though the number of independents is much larger. Additionally, those on the Board of Trustees as well as people that donate to the college were usually involved in Greek life during their time at Gettysburg. Because of these reasons, any president of the College has to navigate their relationship with Greek life with a sizeable amount of care, especially when addressing

²⁹ Rough estimate compiled from email interviews.

³⁰ Gordon Haaland interviewed by Michael Birkner, September 19, 2014, 34.

disciplinary infractions, because although Greek life at Gettysburg is well-supported by alumni and contributes in a positive way to campus life, Greek life is and was responsible for most of the major violations of College policy in relation to expectations regarding hazing, and alcohol and drug use to name a few. Haaland and his administration immediately ran into these issues after he took office.

The move to sophomore rush was Haaland's biggest change in relation to Greek life, and the one for which he received the most pushback. First implemented in the Fall of 2002, the concept of sophomore rush was born out of the Residential and Social Life Advisory Committee, commissioned by the Board of Trustees in 1998. The committee was made up of students, faculty, board members, and administrators "to articulate a vision for the residential and social system here at Gettysburg College and to recommend programming, policies, and facilities that would help to further that vision."³¹ This committee submitted a report to the Board of Trustees and the Board then developed the Statement on Residential and Social Life that was distributed to alums. Sophomore rush was only one of the changes enumerated in this policy—there were also largely overlooked suggestions for improvements to upperclassman housing and opportunities for student-faculty interactions outside the classroom.³² This decision received some of its biggest pushback from alumni.

At the time, many Greek alumni were unhappy with the switch to sophomore rush. In fact, some of the alumni interviewed for this project are still angry with the decision. An SAE brother from the class of 2003 adamantly asserted this year that he would "never" be supportive of the transition to Sophomore rush—he is still as against it now as he was in 2002.³³ His opinion

³¹ Janet Morgan Riggs, Michael J. Birkner, and Steven W. James, "Student Life at Gettysburg College," *Gettysburg Alumni Journal*, 91, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 20.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Jeff Ebert, '03, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

was not uncommon—Professor Michael Birkner recalls being sent by President Haaland to speak to some angry alumni about the switch and remembers that the conversations did not go smoothly nor were the alumni very open to reasonable arguments.³⁴

Students at the time also voiced their anger with sophomore rush, as many letters to the college and *Gettysburgian* articles attest. On particularly passionate letter written in 1999 to the editor of the *Gettysburgian* warned Greek life members,

your chapter will most likely be dead in less than ten years; President Haaland will make sure of it. And those of you who are independent and still socialize at fraternity houses, you must realize the concern should be campus wide. There will be little or no social life at Gettysburg College...Instating this new regulation for pledging will not only destroy the Greek life on campus, but as a result, it will also destroy Gettysburg College...We cannot sit back and watch as President Haaland destroys our school. Take action!”³⁵

Although this letter seems ridiculous in its rhetoric, this article is not the only instance of student displeasure with Haaland as a result of the switch. A flyer found posted on the wall of the College Union Building around this time echoes the sentiments of the letter-writer. The flyer is reproduced below with the permission of Gettysburg College’s Special Collections.³⁶

³⁴ Professor Michael Birkner, conversation with Lindsay Richwine, April 25, 2019.

³⁵ Kevin Sweet, '02, “Is the college taking away our constitutional rights?,” *The Gettysburgian*, November 4, 1999, 11,14.

³⁶ Papers of Mike Malewicki, unprocessed collection, Special Collection, Musselman Library.

DO YOU KNOW PRES. HAALAND?

- 1. HE'S KILLING THE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**
 - 2. HE'S KILLING THE GREEK SYSTEM**
 - 3. HE'S KILLING YOUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE**
- WHAT ELSE IS HE GOING TO KILL?**

PRESIDENT HAALAND AND THE ADMINISTRATION ARE QUIETLY MANIPULATING THE LIVES OF EVERY STUDENT ON CAMPUS. THEY HAVE HURT MANAGEMENT MAJORS AND THEY ARE THREATENING TO DESTROY THE GREEK SYSTEM. PRESIDENT HAALAND AND THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE UNDERMINED MANY STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS. ARE YOU NEXT?

IS IT HAPPENING TO YOU?

JOIN THE GET ACQUAINTED DAY BOYCOTT.....MORE TO COME!!!

It is clear that there was a great deal of displeasure with Haaland and the decision. However, not all students were as angry as the writers of that article and the poster. Chi Omega Adrienne Lukowski Long, '02, was on the transition committee and remembers that,

We weren't happy about it, but it wasn't up for discussion. I think President Haaland wanted students to succeed and having the additional activities that happened during pledging was seen as a negative to the freshman experience. I was not in favor of the transition as a student because my senior class wasn't going to have a pledge class. It felt like we were missing out on a rite of passage...At the same time as a parent now I can understand more of the adult reasoning."³⁷

Despite the uproar over this issue, it was not the first time the alteration or removal of Greek life at Gettysburg had been discussed. In 1987, Professor of Political Science Ken Mott proposed a motion that recommended "the elimination of the fraternity and sorority system over a period of time which will permit the provision of alternate housing and eating arrangements

³⁷ Adrienne Lukowski Long, '02, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

without undue burden to the College or its students.”³⁸ This motion was highly debated in faculty meetings in the years before the Haaland Presidency. First circulated in the December 10, 1987 issue of *This Week At Gettysburg (TWAG)*, Professor Mott’s motion was put forth in response to fraternities’ “demonstrations of disrespect for women and pledges, the systematic undermining and devaluation of individuality and independence of spirit through pledging routines and the imposition of other social requirements, subtle and overt forms of sexism, and the perpetuation of rules and activities which demean and/or interfere with intellectual and academic pursuits.”³⁹ Alpha Tau Omega brother Kevin Kovelant, ’91 remembers both the faculty’s general dislike of fraternities as well as Mott’s push to remove the Greek system, but comments that it did not come to much. He wrote, “A lot of hand-wringing and nothing really happened, other than tightening up some controls over party guidelines (we had to card, and have themed parties, with alternate beverages and food).”⁴⁰ As Mike Malewecki told the authors in an interview, “The fraternity and sorority experience here, love it or hate it, is an integral part of the experience here. [...] And I think at the end of the day, a lot of board members are made up of fraternity and sorority people and they said, you know, with all its problems, why don’t we try to keep it.”⁴¹ The move to sophomore rush was done to strike a kind of compromise between the faculty—who generally disapprove of the Greek system because of its effect on the academic performance of students—and the college community in general that was and is very fond of the Greek system.

The faculty had genuine reason to dislike the Greek system during the Haaland era, as there is a strong correlation between lower GPAs and Greek life. For example, in her letters to

³⁸ “Gettysburg College Faculty Minutes,” February 4, 1988, Glassick Papers, RG-006, Box 9, GCA.

³⁹ Ken Mott memo to Faculty, December 4, 1987, Glassick Papers, RG-006, Box 9, GCA.

⁴⁰ Kevin Kovelant, ’91, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

⁴¹ Mike Malewecki, interviewed by authors, April 24, 2019.

William Metzger, Dean Julie Ramsey expressed her concern that pledging members of TKE at Gettysburg could expect a .15 drop in their GPA.⁴² Professor of Philosophy Steve Gimbel explained the faculty's frustration with Greek life's effect on academics in an interview with the authors, saying how every year he would "lose" one or two good students to Greek life as he watched the quality of their graded work drop. He, like many professors, was in favor of the switch to sophomore year rush, and recognized that, "The initial response was annoyance. But, the interesting thing about a college is, once a rule had been in place for four years, it's been in place forever, because there's no cultural memory of how it used to be."⁴³ Just as Professor Gimbel said, most people got used to the change and eventually saw merit in it.

Even though many charged Haaland for being out to destroy Greek life at Gettysburg, that was really never his goal. In a handwritten note tucked away in his papers, Haaland sketched out his position on Greek life. He recognized the importance of it, as well as the dominance of it on Gettysburg's campus. He scrawled that he was "not anti-Greek, [but] pro-alternatives" to the system so that other types of students can be included.⁴⁴ It appears Haaland did make an effort to provide alternatives on campus. The Attic, a bar-furnished space for concerts and gatherings opened in 2001 to provide students with alternatives to going out to fraternities.⁴⁵ However, the Attic and other school-organized events were not regularly well attended. When asked if there were activities offered not related to Greek life at the college, Delta Gamma Lainia Rinaldi, '95 told the authors in an email interview, "Honestly, I don't remember a single one."⁴⁶ Matt Graber, '92 of ATO remembers a few, saying, "In my senior year we had a couple of concerts, and one

⁴² Julie Ramsey to William Metzger, *Date*, Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

⁴³ Professor Steve Gimbel, interview with authors, April 22, 2019.

⁴⁴ Gordon Haaland, hand-written notes, Papers of President Gordon Haaland, Box 13, GCA.

⁴⁵ Scott Paris, "The Attic—why not?" *The Gettysburgian*, January 30, 2003, 5.

⁴⁶ Lainia Rinaldi, '95, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

year Dana Carvey came to campus, but I do not recall much else in the way of alternative social events. A non-alcoholic bar opened in the CUB [College Union Building] either my junior or senior year, but I do not know of anyone who went to it.”⁴⁷ Though they may not have been as successful as he would have liked, President Haaland did try to implement more programming outside of Greek life.

While he did have frustrations with the Greek system—and to paraphrase Haaland: what college president does not--Haaland recognized that it provided “that sense of belonging that is so important to students of this age group.”⁴⁸ Phi Sigma Kappa Brian Boyle, ’91 perhaps most closely captured President Haaland’s relationship with Greek life in an email interview. Boyle states that “it was a good relationship but cautious due to the association [of fraternities] with underage drinking, but [Haaland] realized [G]reek life was more than just parties and socializing. [Greek organizations] did great things for the community and philanthropic organizations.”⁴⁹ Theta Chi Chris Castagna-Hewes, ’91, shares a similar view, saying, “Honestly, I think he was a supporter of Greek Life. He may have had his moments against them, but I think that was driven by the faculty more than him. He was, in my mind, a keep the status quo on many things Gettysburg.”⁵⁰ Though fraternities continued to reign during Haaland’s presidency, there were occasions where their power was checked. These restrictions on fraternities ultimately steered Gettysburg to where it is today to a much more balanced environment.

The Bright Side to Brotherhood:

⁴⁷ Matt Graber, ’92, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

⁴⁸ Gordon Haaland, “The National Liberal Arts College in the 21st Century, Thoughts for Trustees: a working paper for AGB,” Personal Papers of Gordon Haaland, Box 3, GCA.

⁴⁹ Brian Boyle, ’91, email interview with authors, April 26, 2019.

⁵⁰ Chris Castagna-Hewes, ’91, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

Although much of the negative side of fraternity life has been discussed in this project, it is important to give fair spotlight to the good that fraternities at Gettysburg did in the Haaland years. Though the fraternities typically made headlines for their bad behavior, every now and then there would be heart-warming stories of community services. In 1992 the FIJI brothers held an event for local boys from Gettysburg, ages eight to twelve, wherein the brothers simply hung out with the local kids.⁵¹ The brothers and kids ate pizza and played indoor soccer, touch football, and basketball for a few hours.⁵² In the *Gettysburgian*, one of the FIJI brothers summarized his experience by saying, “I went into this day thinking that I was going to try and teach these kids something. What I realized by the end of the day was that they had actually taught me a thing or two.”⁵³ Though FIJI was known for being the rich party animals, that view only provides a narrow idea of what it really meant to be a brother.

In order to prove the philanthropic service fraternities provided at Gettysburg in the Haaland era, one only has to look at their record. For example, these are some of the philanthropic actions of fraternities in the 1993-1994 school year: Alpha Chi Rho supported Change-A-Life; ATO hosted a clothes drive; Lambda Chi Alpha had a record-breaking Thanksgiving food-drive; PDT participated in the Big Brother program; FIJI participated in Adopt-A-Highway; Phi Kappa Psi held its annual Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser; Phi Sigma Kappa hosted a Bowl-A-Thon and a Pancake Breakfast for the United Way Foundation; Sigma Chi held its annual Derby Days fundraiser; Sigma Nu helped with the Mexican Fiesta; TKE hosted a “Jail Bail” (essentially a bachelor auction,) which raised money for the Wee Care Day Care Center,

⁵¹ Michael Hanes, “Fraternity Learns the Meaning of Brotherhood,” *The Gettysburgian*, December 10, 1992, 5.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

and Theta Chi helped clean the Battlefields in Gettysburg.⁵⁴ Despite all their disciplinary infractions, fraternities still contributed in a positive way to the Gettysburg community.

Beyond philanthropy, fraternities fostered and built brotherhoods, that turn into life-long friendships. TKE John Colucci, '92 told the authors in an email interview, "I met my best man and several lifelong friends in my fraternity, so I value my time as a Greek at Gettysburg."⁵⁵ This notion seemed to hold true across fraternities and throughout the years. Andrew Usmiani, '99, an Alpha Chi Rho (AXP) brother, sweetly sums up his brotherhood experience:

"There are many, many and many [stories]. This is what made us such great friends and I am still very close with my brothers as well as Greek members from other fraternities. We had good times and we had tough times, but we learned how to persevere like a family. At times we helped other brothers who lost parents or siblings. Some brothers were minorities either in cultural, religious or sexual preference. They were at home and never forgot how AXP was a major support system for their years at college."⁵⁶

Haaland recognized the philanthropic value of fraternities as well as their core values of brotherhood, and ultimately why he decided to support them.

Alumni Hindsight:

With a few exceptions, those alumni interviewed for this project looked back fondly on their time in Greek life at Gettysburg. However, as adults, most acknowledge that the fun they had as a part of this system came at a price. Matt Graber, '92, fondly remembers his time in Alpha Tau Omega, but sums it up saying, "I had a lot of fun and my grades plummeted."⁵⁷ When asked about her favorite or proudest moment in Greek life at Gettysburg, Chi Omega Kirsten Fischer Howard, '94 responded poignantly,

⁵⁴ *Spectrum*, 1994, 107-117.

⁵⁵ John Colucci, '92, email interview with authors, April 26, 2019.

⁵⁶ Kirsten Fischer Howard, '94, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

⁵⁷ Jeff Graber, '92, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019

Sadly, I don't have a proudest moment. Instead, I have a collection of stories that match closely with what Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh was recently accused of. Fraternities did behave badly. Boys were crude and disrespectful—and girls were slutty and judgmental. I can tell you the number of visits I had to the Gettysburg ER, and I know a few folks who can't remember entire nights from drinking too much—all from fraternity parties. I can also hilariously recount many, many ridiculous (but funny!) stories of partying and misbehaving, but as an adult, I'm hard-pressed to say those are worth laughing over now that we see more clearly the dangerous sexual and drinking behaviors. I hate to be the downer, but there is more to life than drinking your face off and hooking up. College has a lot to offer inspirational minds, and we should be looking for more ways to broaden students' experience than just having a social system based on [cliques] and perceived kinship.⁵⁸

The FIJI brother who regaled the authors with stories of crazy snowball fights and wild

Christmas parties holds a similar view to Howard, writing,

As funny (or stupid) as these stories might seem, [the characterization of fraternities as wild in the pre-Haaland era] is largely accurate. The *Animal House*-esque depiction of college life was often emulated at Gettysburg during the eighties. Wild parties, a pervasive drug culture, full scale hazing, fraternal rivalries and sadly the open mistreatment of women, was all commonplace. The dominance of Greek Life on campus had it[s] pros and cons...probably a good thing that Gettysburg has found some balance in its life. Some of the traditions and behaviors that jumped off the screen and became norms on campus are probably best suited for the past.⁵⁹

Additionally, many of these Greek alumni are now parents of college or high school-age

children, causing them to view their college years in a different light. As Jennifer Newman

Franklin, '93 writes,

My experience in Greek Life [as a member of Gamma Phi Beta sorority] was amazing—but I definitely put a lot into it and got a lot out of it. That said, as I'm getting ready to send my kids off to college, I have mixed feelings about it for them—depending on the school they end up at. [...] I do also worry about the Rush process [...] I never thought about it while I was there, but for my daughters, I would be much happier with them now if they went to a school where they didn't have to rush right away.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Kirsten Fischer Howard, '94, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, '89, email interview with authors, April 28, 2019.

⁶⁰ Jennifer Newman Franklin, '94, email interview with authors, April 25, 2019.

However positive or negative these reflections might be, Greek life was and continues to be an important part of the College's ethos. However, as the FIJI from '89 says, the normalized over-the-top behavior of fraternities is best left in the past.

Greek Life Today:

If one was to describe a typical Friday night now in 2019, it would not look too different from the imagined 1994 description in the introduction of this paper. While students no longer look to spray-painted bed sheets for their social calendar and dancing in the TKE basement is no longer an option since their removal from campus, dozens of students still end their nights at *Pizza House*, snacking on a cheesesteak and fries. As students today, these authors are glad that things have changed from the *Animal House* era, but we are also glad that Greek life and some of its charms have remained in place. We enjoy the diversity on campus, and the mingling of Greek and non-Greek students and friend groups. While neither of us chose to go Greek, about half our friends did and half of our friends did not. Most who went Greek have had very positive experiences, and we have benefitted from those connections that they have made as we meet new people from different parts of campus through our Greek friends and attend Greek social functions that mingle all types of people.

That being said, there are still issues. Gettysburg regularly turns a blind eye to obvious fraternity violations of college policy, though they have become better with enforcing it. However, though Gordan Haaland may not have been as effective as he would have liked in the alteration of Greek culture on campus, the policies of his administration did have an effect. When Haaland arrived, roughly 70% of students participated in Greek life. At the time of his

departure, it was down to roughly 33%.⁶¹ Today, roughly 32% of men and 35% of women are in a fraternity or a sorority, respectively.⁶² While this accounts for a sizeable portion of the student body and the social scene is more or less centered totally around Greek life, we would argue that the College is no longer a lackey of fraternities. Gettysburg students today have many more opportunities to involve themselves on campus and enjoy their time here, and if they do choose to participate in Greek life or at least attend Greek functions, these spaces are much safer and more controlled. This change is partially a result of the policies of Haaland's administration, as well as the removal or restriction of certain fraternities that repeatedly violated College policy. The move to sophomore rush has allowed more time for the strengthening of friendships outside of Greek life, preventing the isolation of certain groups. The college and fraternity culture grew tremendously under Gordon Haaland, and it continues to grow, steadily plodding towards a more inclusive, safer future.

⁶¹ Interview of Gordon Haaland conducted by Michael Birkner, September 19, 2014, GCA, 34.

⁶² US News, "Gettysburg College Student Life," *Best Colleges Rankings*, accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/gettysburg-college-3268/student-life>.

Appendix A: Number of Members in Each Fraternity from 1990-2004⁶³

| years | ΑΤΩ | ΑΧΡ | ΛΧΑ | ΦΔΘ | ΦΓΔ | ΦΚΨ | ΦΣΚ | ΣΑΕ | ΣΧ | ΣΝ | ΤΚΕ | ΘΧ | Total |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|----|-------|
| 1990 | 15 | 0 | 32 | 35 | 43 | 51 | 41 | 52 | 38 | 29 | 54 | 28 | 418 |
| 1991 | 20 | 16 | 33 | 29 | 46 | 51 | 55 | 57 | 39 | 28 | 59 | 31 | 464 |
| 1992 | 26 | 18 | 36 | 36 | 39 | 42 | 46 | 60 | 38 | 28 | 60 | 0 | 429 |
| 1993 | 26 | 25 | 33 | 36 | 47 | 39 | 48 | 0 | 37 | 32 | 57 | 27 | 407 |
| 1994 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 42 | 47 | 35 | 49 | 0 | 36 | 33 | 51 | 33 | 431 |
| 1995 | 24 | 28 | 34 | 28 | 34 | 41 | 37 | 0 | 21 | 20 | 34 | 37 | 338 |
| 1996 | 31 | 28 | 21 | 40 | 51 | 25 | 43 | 0 | 38 | 22 | 31 | 51 | 381 |
| 1997 | 31 | 47 | 25 | 0 | 62 | 32 | 61 | 20 | 47 | 25 | 43 | 71 | 464 |
| 1998 | 40 | 43 | 25 | 0 | 50 | 41 | 74 | 20 | 36 | 26 | 64 | 49 | 468 |
| 1999 | 23 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 35 | 52 | 33 | 41 | 21 | 18 | 33 | 323 |
| 2000 | 36 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 34 | 41 | 40 | 36 | 23 | 18 | 31 | 331 |
| 2001 | 45 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 38 | 44 | 57 | 43 | 31 | 23 | 36 | 27 | 378 |
| 2002 | 54 | 39 | 31 | 0 | 26 | 36 | 0 | 45 | 17 | 21 | 31 | 0 | 300 |
| 2003 | 27 | 22 | 46 | 0 | 24 | 15 | 32 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 0 | 238 |
| 2004 | 23 | 27 | 39 | 0 | 29 | 22 | 26 | 19 | 14 | 9 | 25 | 0 | 233 |

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⁶³ Numbers are based on fraternity page composites in *Spectrums* from 1990-2004.

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