

# PURDUE GREEK COMMUNITY



Naush Korai, a junior member of Zeta Beta Tau, poses in front of a map of the world in the Krach Leadership Center.



Angie Yuan, a senior and member of alpha Kappa Delta Phi, poses in front of a row of flags in the Purdue Memorial Union.

## International students find homes in the Greek system

BY TAYLOR LAMPE  
Staff Reporter

Ask any new international student about the Greek system, and you may receive one of these responses: "Is it for people from Greece?", "Is it like American Pie?", "I have absolutely no clue..."

For Naush Korai, a junior and a member of Zeta Beta Tau, Greek life was initially a mystery. His home country, Pakistan, has nothing akin to American fraternities and fraternities and it was hard for him to understand them. "I had no idea," he said. "I was very anti-Greek because of my ignorance."

It wasn't until his roommate rushed Zeta Beta Tau that Korai began to change his mind. "The moment I got the tiniest exposure to Greek life and I really understood what it was, I was immediately converted," said Korai. As he watched his roommate get more involved, Korai realized that joining a fraternity would be the perfect way to meet more people and integrate into Purdue's culture.

Similarly, Angie Yuan, a senior and member of alpha Kappa Delta Phi, did not fully understand Greek life before arriving to Purdue. "All (my friends and I) knew about Greek life was through American movies," she said. They all agreed not

to join a sorority when they moved to the states because they thought that would not fit in.

Everything changed when Yuan randomly decided to attend a call-out for alpha Kappa Delta Phi, which is a sorority for Asian students and anyone interested in Asian culture. She was hoping to get more involved on campus, and was impressed by the caliber of people and how comfortable she felt there. "It was not what I expected," she said, and Yuan decided to stay.

International representation in the Purdue Greek system has increased in recent years. As of October, there are 142 international students in the system, which is about 2.5 percent of the total Greek population. Purdue's entire student body, though, is 18 percent international.

Instead of being discouraged by these numbers, Brandon Cutler, director of Fraternity, Sorority and Cooperative Life, sees this as an opportunity for growth. He believes that Purdue should continue to strive for more international representation in the Greek system because it is beneficial for all parties.

For international students, the Greek system helps to create a valuable and supportive community. International students attend school in the United States for a variety of reasons, but many desire to form deep relationships,

improve their English and gain an international perspective. "They want to live a very American experience," said Cutler, and he believes that Greek life is the best way to do this.

"We are so far away from our actual home," said Yuan. "Joining a sorority is our home away from home." Where many students list family members as their emergency contact, Yuan now always writes down her big sister's information on forms. Korai shares similar experiences: "If I am in trouble, these people step up and help me." His brothers have truly become his family.

Students from other countries also bring their unique cultures and experiences into the house dynamic. "When international students join the Greek system, they provide a perspective that can spread very quickly through that organization and teach so many people something so fast," said Korai.

Adam Gardner, Zeta Beta Tau's president, agrees. "Culturally, (having international students) helps our brotherhood get acclimated to the global workforce." With increasing globalization, more than ever it is crucial to be able to understand and work with people from other cultures.

In light of these benefits, Fraternity, Sorority and Cooperative Life has worked to better inte-

grate international students. "There are a lot of considerations that go into how we better meet the needs of our students," said Cutler. Last year, Fraternity, Sorority and Cooperative Life received a grant from the Parents Advisory Board. The money was used to give tours of fraternities and sororities to international students to teach them about the opportunities and benefits of joining. As Korai and Yuan demonstrate, the best way to attract more international students is by increasing awareness.

Once they overcome the challenges of awareness and acclimation, both Korai and Yuan thrived in their houses. Yuan has worked her way up the leadership ladder, and now serves as president for the Multicultural Greek Council, of which alpha Kappa Delta Phi is a part. Korai has a chairman position in his house, and loves using his position to engage with and break stereotypes about international students. "I don't care if people do stereotype me," he said. "I have really thick skin. I love talking to people about stuff."

International students bring many benefits to the Greek system, but ultimately, their experiences are the most important. "Never once have I regretted my decision," said Korai. Yuan echoes Korai's sentiment: "You join alpha Kappa Delta Phi for a lifetime."



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## FarmHouse's Greek Goddess Competition



Alpha Gamma Delta members Grace Barker, a student in the College of Agriculture, and Lauren Miller, a student in the College of Liberal Arts, rap during FarmHouse Fraternity's Greek Goddess Competition on Thursday.



Alyson Cox, a member of Sigma Alpha and student in the College of Engineering, line dances with fellow sorority sisters during the Greek Goddess Competition on Thursday.

### UPCOMING

Be sure to check out future editions of The Exponent for more profiles, photos, and news about Greek life at Purdue.