

# PRIDE MAGAZINE

EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE AT UVA



# Student, Townie, or Both

*By Sean Gramley, Cole Aldrich, and Grady Newberg*

As someone who has experienced being a ‘townie’ on one hand and an everyday UVA student on the other, Thomas Irby possesses a perspective from both sides of a debate which has stumped the greater Albemarle County since UVA’s inception: why such a contentious disconnect between students and locals? The University of Virginia has long been renowned for being a school composed primarily of wealthy legacies coming from all around the world, and Tom confirmed that many of the townies hold a certain negative perception of the students due to their general lack of interest in exploring the cultural history of the city. While most locals are still die-hard supporters of the university athletics teams, they typically come from less privileged backgrounds and do not have the direct lineage of UVA graduates throughout their families that you will see with so many of the students.



“Charlottesville has a large black community,” Tom expanded, “but a lot of the students have no idea what African-Americans have had to endure over the years or the hardships overcome in order to get us where we are today. You see situations like everything that happened at Vinegar Hill which are absolutely integral to the history of civil progress in the city, yet so many who come here for their education have no idea that it ever took place.”

People didn’t necessarily treat him differently or change the way they looked at Tom once they realized he was a townie, but he has remained cognizant of how the association can be perceived in both a positive and negative light depending on the situation. For example, he described how many of his friends confide in him for their wide-ranging inquiries about things foreign to them in Charlottesville and takes great pride in his ability to act as a resource for helping others experience the best things that this community has to offer. At the same time, he acknowledged that most students don’t typically go out of their way to defy these cultural barriers or branch outside of their elitist university organizations due to the way townies are conventionally viewed. When asked what he felt the root of the underlying issue was which has created such a longstanding barrier between both sides, Tom exclaimed, “I honestly believe that misunderstood assumptions concerning each other’s intentions are the core component which has caused the tension that you hear about nowadays. Townie is used as such a broad-ranging term, people rush to affiliate it with rogue groups that they once had an unpleasant interaction with

rather than the everyday residents who I have grown up with and appreciated throughout my life.”

Further than stereotypes alone, disparate treatment against African-Americans perceived to be UVA students versus those perceived to be townies by law enforcement has been a focal



issue for many oppositionists. While Tom could not recall any specific instances where he felt targeted or singled out in public due to being a townie, he

admitted that the more well-off townies who were in fact UVA students admittedly receive preferential treatment. Speaking on an incident that took place at

Trinity Irish Pub during Midsummers one year, Tom chronicled how aimless passive aggression between ‘townie’ students and non-students led to a violent

altercation at the bar. After all was said and done, the UVA students were permitted to stay while the non-students were the ones forced to leave the bar.

Granted things have certainly improved as opposed to how they were at the peak of civil tensions throughout the school’s history, but there is still much discontent

that stems from the prioritization of students coming before locals. “Think about the slave memorial being erected right now and pair it with the racial standoffs we experienced during the 2017 protests...” Tom elaborated, “while the existence of this project undoubtedly represents progress, the fact of the matter is that it was long overdue and many felt scorned by the ignorance of failing to respectfully accredit the group of people responsible for the literal construction of the school.”

At the end of the day, Tom reiterated that he does not consider this relationship at UVA to be noticeably different, for better or worse, than what you’d typically find at any college town throughout the country. “A more conscious effort to be accepting of what each brings to the table would benefit all parties involved,” he opened, “but a certain degree of animosity is to be expected due to the multifaceted constructs that come with any major university setting in contemporary society.”



# Former Men's Basketball Player Cornel Parker Discusses His Time on Grounds

*By: Jack Broach*

Cornel Parker studied Psychology at the University of Virginia from 1990-1994 as a student-athlete on the Men's Basketball Team. Parker hails from Norfolk, Virginia and attended Maury High School before fulfilling his dream and making his way up to Grounds. His time at Virginia began in the summer before the fall of his first-year with the Summer Transition Program, a seven to ten week preparatory instruction that worked to educate incoming students on a variety of coursework. According to Cornel, "I hated to have my summer away, but it was a good experience getting on Grounds before practically everyone else and getting to know professors." One professor Cornel remembers fondly from his time at Virginia taught him the history of India. "There was a professor that taught a history of India class, he was one of my favorite professors. I remembered I could always come by and talk to him. He related the history of India to slavery, so him and I had a pretty good bond". Aside from his Indian Studies professor, it was tough forming a relationship with all his other professors, especially concerning the fact that, "there wasn't a whole lot of black faculty. There was a guy from Howard that taught a sports class, but apart from him, no [there was not enough black faculty]".

Parker went on to state his appreciation for the Peer Advising Program as a mechanism for getting to know people, which was a program that strove to create strong support systems from incoming first-years or transfers by setting them up with upperclassmen for informal interaction to help mitigate the social transition. That social outlet introduced him to people outside of basketball early on. While being a member of the basketball team took up much of his time, Cornel also managed to engage in activities and social life outside of basketball. He often frequented the Black Bus Stop (BBS) and had to say, "it was a place of fun and accountability, at a certain time of the day that's where a lot of people met at the BBS and you could see a whole bunch of African American people out there talking amongst each other just hanging out and checking-in." When asked about other places he hungout, Cornel went on to say, "they tore [it] down, but there was a place called the Treehouse. It was like a little cache[hideaway], right across from the football field and the old dorms that they're tearing down and making new dorms it was right across from there. A lot of times at night time a lot of people would come hangout



there”. When asked if there were any places on Grounds he did not necessarily feel welcome, Cornel stated, “no, I felt welcome everywhere. The fraternity houses, they had parties there I felt welcomed and the Corner was a good time.” When they managed to catch a break from basketball, Cornel and his teammates socialized as they pleased. Life on Grounds for the basketball star was perhaps a little different than the average African American when considering his prominence as a student-athlete in the 1990s, but overall he had a great and

inclusive social experience. When asked if he agreed with the view that the 1990s at UVA are seen as a cultural explosion generated by the peak in African-American enrollment, the rise of hip-hop, and Afrocentricity, Cornel said, “yes, I would definitely agree, good times”. There is no doubt Parker embodies the culture of the early 1990’s at the University and what it meant to be African-American on Grounds then.

Nevertheless, Cornel Parker came here with a basketball scholarship, and most of his life during his four years on Grounds revolved around that . Consequently, some of his most cherished and close relationships originated through basketball. While Cornel was not a participating member of the Black Student Alliance (BSA), many of his teammates were. They introduced him to things like the Office of African American Affairs (OAAA) , Fraternity and Sorority life, and African American Studies. Dean Rick Turner, then head of OAAA, holds a special place in Cornel’s heart. “All the basketball players had a good

relationship with him [Dean Rick Turner], we knew his kids as well too because they went to highschool nearby. Very supportive, great guy, always came around the practices and told us if we needed something to just stop past his office”. Parker also sought mentorship from the basketball coaching staff. “Coach [Brian] Ellerbe, he was our assistant coach, I had a real good relationship with him”. During his time at Virginia, Cornel helped the basketball team secure the NIT Championship, as well as multiple NCAA Tournament berths and a Sweet Sixteen appearance in the 1992-1993 season. He was a part of legendary commentator Dick Vitale’s All-Velcro team for defense multiple times. Tony Bennett would surely appreciate Cornel’s hard work today. Nowadays, Cornel Parker gives back to the community that raised him as a coach for the Maury Commodores boys and girls basketball teams and a student counselor at the Norfolk public school.



**Cornell Parker**  
GUARD

Born: 4-4-70  
Resides: Norfolk, VA

Height: 6-7  
Weight: 189

YEAR	TEAM	G	FG%	FT%	REB	AS	PPG
90-91	Virginia	32	.433	.557	98	42	4.0
91-92	Virginia	32	.387	.661	103	53	5.3
92-93	Virginia	31	.415	.696	213	98	11.0
93-94	Virginia	31	.370	.681	152	120	7.6
TOTALS		126	.399	.646	566	313	6.9

If you talk about Mr. Defense, baby, you start with Cornell Parker. He can guard you on the inside as well as on the perimeter. This flat out big-timer is a defensive specialist, the original Rambo Man, as he can check you big-time style. Yes, he flat out loves defense. If I could find one guy to stop somebody, the guy I would call is Cornell Parker.

©1994 Classic Games, Inc.

*Dick Vitale* 83

# Former Fraternity President and IFC Member Discusses His Time on Grounds

*By: Hill Kelley*

Lazare (Laz) Zoungrana graduated in 2019 and was the first black president of DKE, both in the Eta chapter at UVA and nationally. He was also a member of the IFC. While he is proud of being the first black president of DKE, he doesn't feel like race played a huge role in his fraternity experience.

When asked about how he evaluated different houses during the rush process he said: "Race didn't play a role for me in the rush process. Honestly, when I decided to rush I only rushed DKE because a lot of kids that went to my high school were in it that I was close with, specifically the president at the time who I played sports with and one of my best friend's older brothers. I got to know their friends during the fall and summer so I knew that they were welcoming so I wasn't really scared about that. I couldn't really speak to the other fraternities since I wasn't as comfortable or didn't know people in them beforehand, which is why I didn't really rush them."



Laz felt comfortable rushing DKE because he knew members of the fraternity going in. The majority of DKE members are from the North East and, being from Connecticut, Laz felt that he had a shared experience with many of the fraternity members regardless of the fact that DKE is predominantly white.

During his time in the fraternity Laz came to be very well liked and very well respected. During his 3rd year he was voted president of the fraternity. "It was definitely an honor. I didn't necessarily want to be president but it meant a lot that my peers decided to vote me as president. I also knew that it wasn't exactly normal to have a black president of an all white fraternity so I was conscious of that. One thing during the rush process as president was that I hoped more black students would rush and hopefully join the fraternity." Laz did his best during his time as president to encourage more black students to join the fraternity, unfortunately DKE still has a relatively low number of black members. Laz thinks that DKE has had trouble recruiting black members because many black kids are turned off with the greek system in general because of its negative reputation. He is hopeful that this trend will change in the coming years.

Laz said he ran into surprisingly few issues as the president of DKE: "I honestly didn't run into many issues like you would think. Within the fraternity I obviously didn't run into any issues as they were the ones who voted me in the first place."



Laz said while he wasn't the only black fraternity president on grounds he was the only black president in the IFC. However there were “other non-white members of the council such as Ashwanth who was president of the council.”

## PANTHERS

*By Cole Aldrich, Grady Newberg, and Sean Gramley*

Drake is the Co-Founder of an underground organization that was founded in 2017. The organization is comprised of selected African American individuals from certain fraternities that have excelled by displaying leadership and academic excellence. This group was started by Drake and another student at Uva, who chose to stay anonymous. The inspiration behind the group was clear: “There was a void within the social construct of Uva, which lacked an opportunity for African American males already involved in Greek life to build a greater network amongst like-minded people.” He described these individuals, who are selected and initiated, as those who are unafraid to lead and excel. Once the two co-founders reached high positions

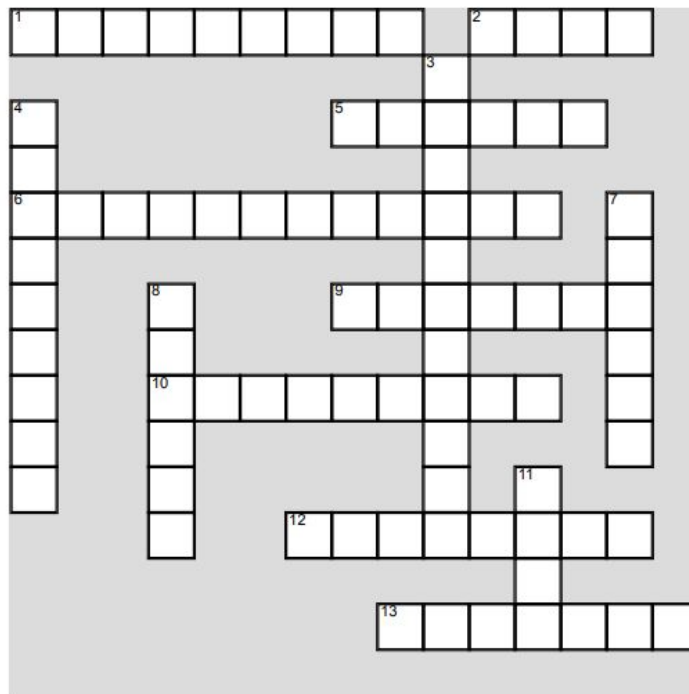


within their fraternities, they decided to found the organization and quickly initiated 15 members in the spring of 2018. This is how Drake described it: “It was very well received. It was kept secretive – some classmates who could not be involved were even excited. It was something that never existed.” The group is still strongly active today. It is even continued to be active beyond graduation. He described it as “a network that is not built for a temporary period of time. This is why inductions are taken very seriously. If we do not see any viable new members, we will not initiate anyone. We engage in regular discussions on grounds about what it is like to be a black male in this time period. We focus on our pride in who we are and how we will never suppress our identities. We celebrate and promote a positive message about the 21<sup>st</sup> century black male.” This was an interesting discussion, as the group name is still unknown and we wanted to know why it is still underground. Drake

responded by saying that the framework is already in place for something great to happen... “we would hate to interrupt the natural evolution of our organization. We would like to give it a few years to see what the guys on grounds have molded it into because they are the ones leading it now.” While the group is still being grown, and has yet to establish a connection with the University administration, they have already set forward several long-term goals. They hope to, “in the right way, build name recognition for the group – this group needs to be a box that

African American males at Uva want to check off and aspire to be in. We want to build a brand by ensuring that we attract and retain the best and the brightest.”

## People and Places that Shaped UVA



### Across

- 1 Strip of bars, restaurants and shops near UVA
- 2 Last name of the student who was expelled by honor in 1997
- 5 Last name of the "raindrop kid"
- 6 In the fall of 1997 UTS tried to change this location to in front of clark (3 words)
- 9 Last name of the president of student council during Farmington Crisis
- 10 location of most of UVA's Greek organizations (2 words)
- 12 Last name of the founder of the Carter G. Woodson Institute
- 13 Last name of the UVA President that established ACESSUVA

### Down

- 3 NY sandwich spot
- 4 Restaurant who's owner implemented a dress code
- 7 Last name of the founder of the BEA
- 8 Professor...
- 11 First name of one of the first black athletes at UVA

*By Harrison Kapp*



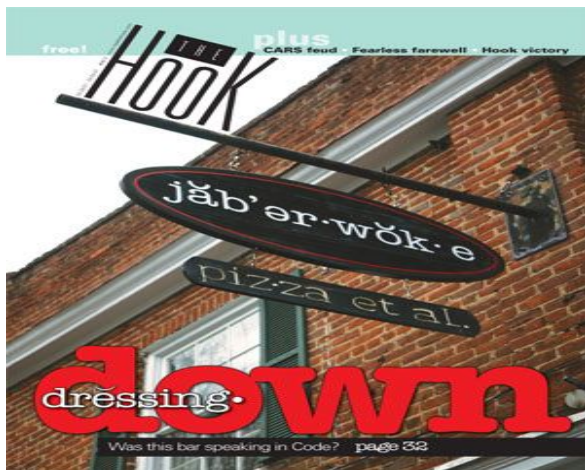
## Corner Bars Shouldn't Require UVA IDs for Entry

*By Reed Huston, Tommy Inglima, and David Payne*

In the last several years, Charlottesville bars located on the corner have implemented policies that require patrons to show a valid University of Virginia student ID to enter. The intention of the requirement is to minimize conflict and prevent predatory behavior from outsiders. While the bars began implementing this rule following several incidents in years prior over concern for public safety, the policy is discriminatory and targets a specific demographic, mainly that of Charlottesville locals and African Americans.

The Virginian, The Biltmore, and Boylan Heights have all enforced this policy on and off for the past several years. Former General Manager of Boylan Heights, Adharsh McCabe, has had a policy instituted since March 2018 that they don't let drunk people in the door and, if it's after 11 p.m., you are required to have a UVA student ID. McCabe was quoted saying, "That's a policy I instituted two months ago — and a couple of other places on The Corner, as well — and that's why it's a no-drugs, **no-thugs** scene here". While this practice may not be overtly discriminatory and is framed as being aimed at public safety for students, it hints towards a known pattern of discrimination against protected classes such as the local African American population of Charlottesville.

The Corner is primarily a place for students to gather during the school year, however Charlottesville locals are just as welcome and deserving of enjoying the scene and festivities that the Corner has to offer. Charlottesville is their permanent home and the locals should not be discriminated upon based on the misconception that many of them are "thugs" or trouble makers.



UVA is a public institution and while the Corner bars are not directly associated with UVA, there is a strong relationship between the two institutions and UVA should take steps to work with bars and figure out a solution to this potentially discriminatory practice.

The UVA ID requirement imposed by the corner bars is similar to the dress code that was implemented in the corner restaurant, Jaberwoke, in 2007. Like the bars, Jaberwoke acted in a discriminatory way to prevent specific patrons from entering. Although the

two cases differ in that Jaberwoke was open during the day and the corner bars are open until 2am, Jaberwoke should be an example to learn from. While corner bars argue they have implemented their policies to increase safety, they could achieve this through other means. Instead of prohibiting anyone without a UVA ID, they could improve safety by not allowing belligerent customers from entering and not over serving customers.

Discriminating against Charlottesville locals and prohibiting anyone without a UVA ID from entering doesn't necessarily accomplish anything. UVA students could just as easily be at fault for causing incidents. Instead of focusing on segregating non-UVA students from UVA students, the bars should focus on making operational improvements to prevent fights and unwelcome behavior. If the bars focused more on preventing raucous behavior inside their establishments and less on the appearance or credentials of who was entering, they would be more successful at maintaining a controlled environment.

The discriminatory practices enforced by certain restaurants at the Corner reflect the many ways that the expansion of UVA leads to the continued displacement of local citizens from their communities. The expansion of UVA affects more aspects of the community than simply the acquisition and development of land for the use of the University. To meet the demand that a school like UVA brings, many businesses feel forced to enact measures that they feel protect their bottom-line. The supposed economic benefits of such policies can have real consequences on the non-University community.

Members of the Charlottesville community do not go back home when UVA is not in session. Charlottesville is their home. They are permanent members of the community and they live their own lives independent of when UVA is in session. It is unjust for restaurants to "allow" the community into their restaurants during the quiet parts of the year, only to not allow them for the remaining 8 months of the year. Another significant issue is the lack of regulatory power UVA has on the restaurants at the Corner. UVA has the ability to reform their own practices if they sense any potential discrimination. However, they have no authority to intervene when they feel a business on the Corner is discriminating against the community. This lack of regulatory power leads to certain businesses only accommodating to citizens in the community when it is economically beneficial.

## X-Tasee: Building Bridges With Hip Hop

*By: Rachel Varon*

UVA has an inherent paradox in that it is an integral part of the Charlottesville community, and yet there is an inherent divide that exists between the university and much of the Charlottesville population. There is a group at UVA, however, that has made it part of their mission to bridge this divide through Hip Hop and dance. X-Tasee is one of UVA's most elite dance groups, and features members of the UVA student body as well as Charlottesville residents. Their performances, too, range from performing at UVA traditions like Lighting of the Lawn, to representing UVA at the half-time show at Basketball Games, to performing back-up dance routines for local Charlottesville artists.

Third year student and X-Tasee dancer, Estee Keith, describes X-Tasee as one of the most diverse CIO's at UVA. "We have four non-UVA members at the moment. We have every minority and a lot of LGBTQ representation as well," Keith stated. When X-Tasee was founded in 2005, however, it was an all-black Hip Hop dance group. Keith described how, over time, the dance group has diversified to include Asian, Hispanic and Caucasian members, but with the consistent standard of exclusively recruiting members that have the 'X-factor'. The X-factor is how X-Tasee members refer to an intangible quality every group member of X-tasee has that becomes immediately apparent when they perform as a group, despite any external differences that may exist between individual dancers. "One of my friends on the team is a tall, bleached-blond spin instructor and we have nothing in common but the x-factor," Keith describes, "but when you see us dance together you can tell."

Whether a dancer has the X-factor or not is discovered through a three-day audition process at the beginning of each semester. After deliberations from the existing members, a new class of dancers are selected, and the practices begin. "We have four hours of practice a week, and before competitions it can be anywhere between six and twelve hours," explained Keith. The combination of the hard work the members put in, and the special X-factor every individual brings to the table hasn't gone unnoticed, however. Last year for College Game Day, when UVA played rival Duke University, ESPN contacted X-Tasee to perform for the half-time show. "Usually the UVA Dance Team and the Cheerleaders perform, but that year they decided they wanted something more contemporary and edgy, something more exciting, so they reached out to us and asked if we could perform on national television the very next day. All of us just cancelled our plans and said yes," Keith said, reflecting on their biggest performance.

While the competitions and the show-cases are exciting opportunities to develop and display new dance skills and choreographies, Keith describes the sense of family within the team as one of the most rewarding aspects of being a member of X-Tasee. She explained, "I love being in Greek life but many other parts of my life and personality are fulfilled by X-Tasee. I

have gay dads and its way more comfortable in groups like this than in Greek life. They don't need to be explained things like equality and diversity, they get it."



(Estee Keith: bottom row, middle)

# The NPHC & Its Philanthropic Efforts

*By Warren Moss and Benny Bencks*

The National Pan-Hellenic Council is the umbrella organization that represents historically black organizations throughout the United States. At the University of Virginia, it represents the 7 black greek organizations on grounds. Its goal is to uphold the traditions and represent the values of the original greek organizations they were founded upon. The NPHC accomplishes these goals through community service projects, forums, and step shows both at UVA and throughout the Charlottesville community. Below, please find a list of the events that the NPHC holds as a collective as well as some of the events that each individual greek organization takes part in. Additionally, for an updated list of events and ways to get involved, check out the NPHC website <https://nphcatuva.wixsite.com/uvanphc> as well as their instagram page @nphcatuva.

## NPHC Events

Aug. 27 - Sep. 3: Back to School Drive

Sep. 11 at 7:00 PM: NPHC Meet the Greeks

Sep. 18 at 7:00 PM: Too Lit To Quit: Alcohol and Drug Abuse Awareness Forum

Oct. 22 at 7:00 PM: These Hands Don't Haze: Hazing Prevention Forum

Nov. 6 at 6:00 PM: NPHC Homecoming Yard Show

Nov. 25 at 7:00 PM: Let's Talk About Consent Sexual Assault Prevention Forum

**Alpha Phi Alpha:** Each week the members of the UVA Iota Beta chapter travel to Clark Elementary School in Charlottesville and serve as "Big Brothers" to a group of 4th graders.

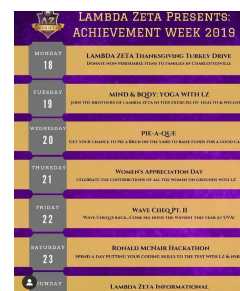
**Alpha Kappa Alpha:** The ladies of the Theta Kappa Chapter at UVA are not involved in one specific philanthropic event, rather they involve themselves in many different service opportunities such as the Boys and Girls Club, Girl Scouts, American Red Cross, Ronald McDonald House, Salvation Army and many more.

**Kappa Alpha Psi:** The brothers of the Eta Sigma Chapter are involved in two community service programs: Kappa League and Guide Right. Through Kappa League they volunteer weekly at Albemarle High School and with Guide Right they volunteer weekly at Jackson-Via Elementary School.

**Omega Psi Phi:** At UVA, the Lambda Zeta chapter involves themselves in many different services opportunities including food drives, talent hunt programs, beauty pageants, toy drives and more.

**Delta Sigma Theta:** The ladies of the Kappa Rho chapter find themselves involved in Habitat for Humanity, P.E.A.R.L.S., Adopt-a-Street, 'HOOp Dreams, and the Ronald McDonald House.

**Pi Beta Sigma:** The gentlemen of the Zeta Eta chapter are involved in many philanthropies. Their key involvement is in Under the Hoodie: A Trayvon Martin Forum.





## **Socializing in Barbados vs. Socializing at UVA: interview with Mandy Haywood**

*By: Sarah Doss and Isabelle Ezratty*

The transition into college is always difficult for any 18 year old leaving their home and facing independence for the first time. Whether you attend college close to home or out-of-state, there is no question that coming entering College as an international student presents unique challenges. The culture at the University of Virginia is monolithic; although the overall campus has increased its diversity through activists, programs, and institutions, the university still struggles to appear a welcoming environment to many minority groups.

Second year student, Mandy Haywood shines some light in order to highlight the complexities and difficulties that international students experience transitioning into their first few years of college. Mandy described the difficult culture shock of coming to UVA from Barbados; “There were distinct hardships in transitioning to UVA for me, in terms of class structure, living norms, and social customs”. The culture at UVA is vastly different than it is in Barbados. Mandy described the major differences she noticed mainly pertained to the social scene: the music, dancing, and clothing.

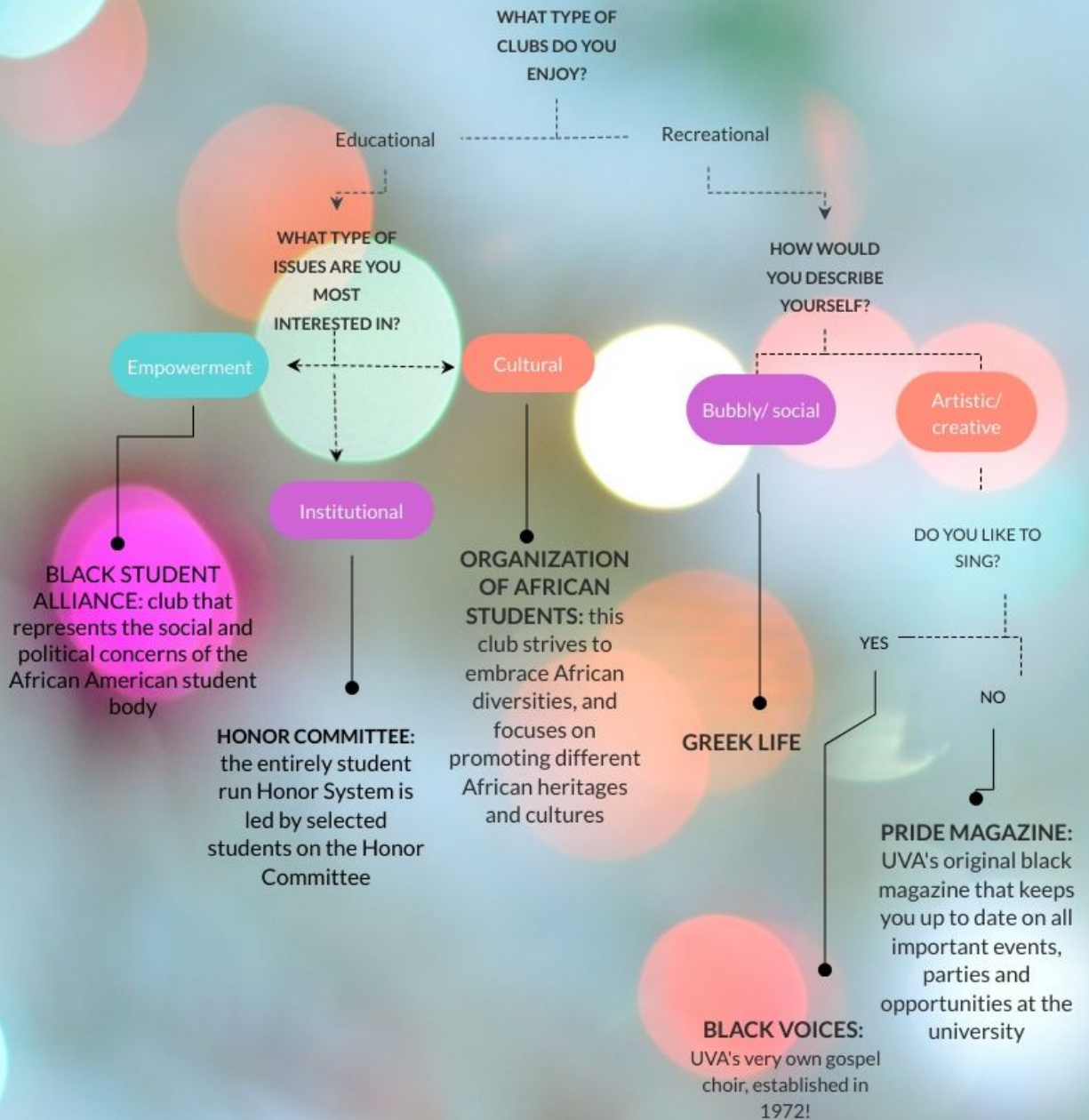
One aspect of college life that didn’t change for Mandy was squash. In Barbados she explained how she either played in individual tournaments or competed for her country at the regional and international tournaments. Therefore, her transition into the UVA squash team was not a stressful one. Her addition to the team was a new experience for UVA’s program, however; Mandy was part of the first class of international squash recruits. But, luckily the UVA squash team helped her adjustment into college life and American culture run more smoothly. With the squash team as an instant support system, Mandy gained a family away from home that guided her in the right direction. As an international student-athlete, Mandy states that she was given many opportunities, from orientation, to meet-and-greets, and dinners for other students in the same position. The majority of people that she made connections with were also international student-athletes, including those newly international players on our team.

However, after committing to UVA for squash, she was hesitant at how smooth her transition would be once she arrived in Charlottesville. A couple of weeks after she committed in August 2017, she heard about the neo-nazi riots. She stated, “That riot happened after I had committed to UVA, therefore when my parents or other persons who knew I committed saw it on the news they mentioned it to me cautioning”. Thankfully, Mandy decided to stay committed and go to UVA despite all the bad press and concerns and she shared that she is glad she persevered and didn’t give in to the fear those protesters had hoped to instill in her.



# What clubs should you join

at UVA?



# **The New Normal of IFC-NPHC Fraternal Relations**

*By: Daniel Crystal*

Cheryl Lundy Swift, a 1993 UVA graduate, gave a lecture to our Black Fire class in late October about her experience at UVA in the early 1990s. She shared that Inter-Fraternity Council fraternities (historically white fraternities) and black fraternities (those in the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)) would often co-host events during this time. She described this as a nice way to meet new people. This in particular stuck out to me, because the situation is vastly different today, with co-hosted events of this nature being largely non-existent.

From Spring 2018 through Fall 2018, I served as the President of Alpha Epsilon Pi, an IFC fraternity. As part of my duties, I had to attend monthly Presidents Gatherings, hosted by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) and attended by the presidents of all 63 Greek organizations at UVA, including IFC fraternities, ISC sororities, NPHC fraternities and sororities, and Multicultural Greek Council fraternities and sororities. The hot button issue we most often discussed was diversity and inclusion. The FSL leadership specifically pushed IFC fraternities and black fraternities to make efforts to co-host events. From my observations during my tenure, this effort did not bring about any meaningful change to the situation.

There are several reasons why the situation has deteriorated since the 1990s and why I do not expect it to improve in the near future. Firstly, African American undergraduate enrollment is substantially lower than it was when it peaked at over 1,300 in 1993. In 2012, for the first time in 25 years, this figure fell below 1,000. According to UVA data on diversity, African American undergraduate enrollment was 1,085 in 2018. In line with this change, black fraternities appear to have seen a decline in membership. The total membership of UVA's four black fraternities ranges from only 4 members up to 9 members, according to the UVA NPHC website. Comparatively, IFC chapters range in size from 32 members to 83 members, according to the UVA IFC website. These immense size differentials present an obstacle to co-hosting an event, especially if the event is to feel balanced in terms of representation.

Another reason lies in the divergent missions of IFC fraternities and black fraternities, at least below the surface. From my discussions at Presidents Gatherings with leaders of black fraternities, it is clear that their organizations prioritize service over social life. IFC fraternities, although they are purported to be philanthropic organizations, generally spend a lot more time, money, and effort on social events than service events, including their philanthropies. I know this from personal experience with my chapter. I'm not saying either is better, but this can create an issue of compatibility. The differing missions can also make it less appealing to co-host an event.

The term self-segregation came up in a Black Fire lecture in regards to conversations around the Black Bus Stop. It is clear from UVA's troubled history, that the generation of black students, known as the Institution Builders, formed their own black greek organizations either out of exclusion from IFC fraternities or out of preference to be amongst those with shared experiences. Although diversity and inclusion has increased in IFC fraternities, black undergraduate men overwhelmingly do not enter greek organizations, with fewer than 30 total current black fraternity members. My fraternity had an African American student who declined an offer of a bid, because his parents would only allow him to join a black fraternity. Although he may be seen more as an exception in his desire to join an IFC fraternity, this shows the complex history that exists in this space.

Whether we like to admit it or not, there exist cultural differences between white Americans and African Americans. These differences should not be shied away from, but rather celebrated. This does not preclude an African American from joining a predominantly white IFC fraternity. If an African American male at UVA feels more comfortable joining a black fraternity, however, then this too is perfectly fine. How does this relate to co-hosting events? It is likely that this FSL initiative to increase co-hosting of events suffers for the same reasons. In talking to a few leaders of black fraternities during Presidents Gatherings, they don't appear concerned with the lack of co-hosting of events. Similarly, IFC fraternity leaders for the most part also share a similar lack of concern or desire, but given their size and larger presence, it would seem the responsibility would fall on them to take the initiative to co-host. This has not been happening. Looking just at the IFC, it is rare even for IFC fraternities to co-host events together. And so, co-hosting in general does not appear to be a desirable move for fraternities

Is this a bad thing? I don't believe so. It would certainly be nice to foster a larger sense of community at UVA and across greek life specifically through co-hosting events. It could also be useful, given the low membership totals of black fraternities, for IFC fraternities to offer more support for black fraternity events to aid in fostering their growth. However, as long as IFC fraternity members and black fraternity members treat each other respectfully and do not interfere in each other's functioning, then the current state of things does not pose a threat.