Oh, the places you’ll go!

Greek Life — What’s It All About?

“School Daze,” “Animal House” and “Stomp the Yard” are entertaining movies, but they aren’t the most accurate depictions of Greek Life on a college campus. Yet it’s this inaccurate understanding that frames a lot of the conversation parents and students have when discussing joining a fraternity or sorority.

Michelle Guobadia, director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, and Bonny Shade, assistant director, want parents to know that Greek Life at UNC Charlotte is so much more than what you see in the media.

Greek organizations are first and foremost about building bonds and friendships that can last a lifetime. These bonds are forged through shared rituals and a strong sense of community. Guobadia and Shade said more than 2,000 students involved in Greek Life during 2013-2014 logged 20,000 hours of community service and raised $109,000 dollars for various charities.

Deciding to join a fraternity or sorority is a big decision for students and parents, but Bonny Shade says there are many great benefits.

“It is a decision that will help stabilize students’ lives by increasing student development, good decision making skills and gaining friends for life,” said Michelle Guobadia.

UNC Charlotte fraternities and sororities enjoy breaking from the traditional stigmas of Greek Life. The biggest misconception is that Greek Life is one long party filled with heavy drinking. While there are parties and social events, UNC Charlotte Greeks enjoy participating in team building activities and professional development events such as Greek Week and the Association Fraternal Leadership and Values Conference.

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DEPARTMENT FEATURE

Recreational Services Offers Fitness, Fun and More

The lights come on. The whistle is blown. The friendly competition begins. What could be more fun than getting together a team of your classmates, friends and roommates to play your favorite sport?

Between intramural sports, fitness programs, club sports, the annual 5K and the fitness center, the UNC Charlotte Recreational Services department has exercise options available to every student. “Part of our mission under Student Affairs is to help keep students engaged and active when they aren’t in the classroom and to support the academic mission,” said Director of Recreational Services Jim Walczyk.

With more than 30 different intramural sports offered throughout the year, the UNC Charlotte Recreational Services department offers plenty of ways to get involved on campus. The Student Activity Center offers access to the drop-in fitness center, which is open until 11 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. There are 40 group fitness classes a week, including spinning, yoga, Zumba and cross-training classes, as well as many recreational, instructional and competitive club sports.

Club sports allow students to participate in new sports they may have never experienced before.

“If you’re not interested in competing, you can join a club team just to learn about the sport and be part of a group for the social engagement aspect,” Walczyk said. However, most club teams are competitive. The wide variety of sports allows students to explore new interests. There are even unique options such as Quidditch, the fictional game played in the “Harry Potter” series.

“If you’ve never tried lacrosse, but you possess the athletic skills that are required for the sport, we encourage you try it out and join,” Walczyk said.

Recreational Services holds three signature events for students, parents and family members. Rec Fest kicks off the academic year and gives a glimpse of the department’s services. The 49er Gold Rush 5K lets runners and walkers raise money for charity. “The race has grown every year. We almost had 800 participants last year,” Walczyk said. The event is held on the first weekend of February and is open to students at a discounted rate.

Recreational Services also holds the On the Green golf tournament. The proceeds fund a $5,000 P.J. Briggs Scholarship that is offered to students employed through Recreational Services.

“Our department is here to help students enjoy their college experience and teach them good habits now,” Walczyk said. “We want students to find their niche in health and wellness.”

Recreational Services encourages students to get active while in college and gives them an opportunity to promote others’ fitness as well. More than 300 student employees are hired through the department throughout the year. Positions such as fitness assistants, intramural officiates, promotions and marketing employees, sport club supervisors, group fitness leaders and personal trainers can enhance students’ work experience while in school.

“A lot of stuff that we do will reinforce what students are learning in the classroom or lend worthwhile life lessons like good communication skills,” Walczyk said. Most of the students are hired as scorekeepers, officiates and supervisors for intramural sports. However, when Belk Gym reopens next fall, the department will be looking to hire students to fill a number of additional roles, such as lifeguarding. Walczyk expects to triple the life guarding staff when the Belk Gym pool reopens.

If you have any questions about Recreational Services or want to sign up for their signature events, see recservices.uncc.edu.

Sarah Cain
**SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**Help Is Only a Phone Call Away**

UNC Charlotte has more than 300 emergency phone stations — often called blue light phones — across campus. The phones are easily spotted as those with the bright blue lights atop them or the yellow emergency call boxes. The phones have an emergency button with a speaker and microphone that immediately connect the user with UNC Charlotte police communications operators. The call is then dispatched to police to assist or investigate.

The emergency phones are located along walkways, in parking decks and in buildings. They are used not only for emergencies, but also to report suspicious persons or activities and to request a safety escort. Students should familiarize themselves with the system, and identify the phones in the areas around campus they frequent.

If a caller in need of emergency help does not feel it is safe to stand by the phone to wait on police, they can walk and press the buttons on the phones they pass. This will provide dispatchers with an accurate route and help officers locate the caller as he or she moves from that area.

It is important to us that parents and students get to know the many safety systems that are in place across campus to keep UNC Charlotte protected.

— Officer Betty Anderson

**Greek Life - continued from page 1**

But if you did try to recreate the fraternities and sororities you see in TV and film, you’d quickly realize you wouldn’t be able to maintain that lifestyle for long. To participate in Greek Life at UNC Charlotte, students must keep a high GPA or risk facing sanctions from the groups.

Guobadia and Shade are often proud of their students because of their tireless work ethic to achieve their goals. “If there is an issue within their organization they create a plan to fix it,” Guobadia said.

For parents who have a student considering joining Greek Life, Guobadia suggests that they keep an open mind. Parents can reach out to the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life to ask questions and voice concerns or to learn what it means to be apart of one of these organizations.

— Tamara McNeill
For 21 million people enrolled in colleges across America, finding a job after graduation is harder than ever. Internships and volunteering can help job seekers stand out in an ever-increasing crowd. Senior Ian Petrere, a communications major from Indian Trail, interns for the Dean of Students Office. This opportunity has expanded his resume.

Petrere decided to become a 49er because he felt the University would give him a chance to make his own path. “The university is so young that you can still participate in the tradition, and also create your own by making an impact on the growing institution,” he said. He wasn’t sure where that would lead him, but he knew where it started. “I was very intentional about getting my foot in the door, wherever I could.”

Petrere plays intramural sports and participated in the Leadership Fellows program. He even served as a coordinator in UNC Charlotte’s 10-week leadership program, which teaches students the skills an effective leader must master, such as ethics and integrity, professionalism, team building and more. He found his passion in peer-to-peer development when serving as an orientation counselor the summer before his junior year. He says it was the best summer of his life because he could be part of a team and build lasting relationships with all types of people. It was this opportunity that opened the door for the internship in the Dean of Students Office.

Petrere serves as an assistant to Dr. Dennis Wiese, senior assistant dean and director of new student and family services, helping Weise prepare for meetings, work with the veterans’ office and help recruit counselors for orientation.

Petrere said the work has helped him prepare for life after college, having already been offered a position as an executive team leader at Target and will manage a store for the retail giant. “I chose to work for Target because they have so much opportunity to get involved and to make things happen,” he said. Petrere is excited to have found a job, but he’s already looking far into his future. “I’m really career driven,” he said. “Any opportunity where I can consistently interact with people is where I want to be.”

That’s why he chose to study communications at UNC Charlotte: to make personal connections. “The biggest thing I’ve learned in my major is how important communication is,” he said. “I’m able to use the skills I’ve learned in class and implement them in job interviews or in my organizations.”

When he graduates in May, Petrere says he won’t forget those connections and will cherish him time at UNC Charlotte: “I may not remember everything that I learned in my classes or the score of all the football games I’ve attended,” he said, “but I’ll remember the people I have met and the experiences I have had with them.”

— David Wolf

**GUEST DEPARTMENT FEATURE - PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

No place to park? Not so!

Parking demand was strong the first few weeks of classes and traffic on narrow campus roads had periods of being beastly. This is normal and expected... and annoying. But now that everyone has settled into a routine, parking patterns and traffic backups have eased.

That said, Union Deck, Lots 18 and 19, East 2 and West Decks are areas that will continue to fill up because they are closest to the academic center of campus. Who doesn’t want to park as close as they can? A class schedule that is heavily loaded from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm Monday - Thursday ensures that once at capacity, those areas will stay packed for several hours.

If your student has an 11:00 am class and don’t arrive on campus until 10:30, it’s fair to assume that they will not easily find a place to park in a high-demand area. It’s far more likely they’ll circle a full deck and be late for class. At peak demand (based on class schedule) the average time...
Community Engaged Learning

As the semester draws to a close, students are focusing on exams, papers, and final projects before taking some much-earned rest during winter break. Winter break is a time to reflect on the semester that past, but also on the academic journey ahead. Please encourage your student to explore those opportunities that will enrich his or her educational experience while at UNC Charlotte. An example of an experience that students are investigating with increasing interest is community engaged learning in an international context.

Community engaged learning (often called service-learning) is an important way in which students build on what they learn in the classroom. An experiential learning approach, community engaged learning allows students to work with community partners to identify needs, learn about local knowledge and practice, and use information they study in the classroom to address pressing societal issues. Community engaged learning can be very challenging for students because this work pushes them to examine their own assumptions and explore new perspectives. Research tells us that community engaged learning develops self-awareness as a student outcome; students gain knowledge about themselves and the world beyond the classroom.

Likewise, international exposure develops and strengthens a student’s ability to ease misunderstandings, communicate with and appreciate people with diverse perspectives, and to navigate an increasingly global, interconnected world. Studying internationally broadens students’ horizons and helps them develop intercultural skills. More than the sum of service-learning and study abroad, community engaged learning in an international context is a transformative in a unique way; it enables students to exchange ideas and information with communities around the world to develop new practices forge new relationships that improve our society.

UNC Charlotte sponsors several innovative academic programs abroad sponsored by our own professors. Students participating in these programs can earn academic credit while studying a research topic related to that professor’s area of expertise. These programs range in length from the week of Spring Break to an academic year. Below are just a few examples of faculty-led Spring Break programs in Malawi and Ecuador, and summer programs in South Africa with a community engagement component.

In Malawi, students perform hands-on work at two rural non-governmental organizations: one in the rare tropical rainforest area of Malawi, and the other on the shores of Lake Malawi. The program also visits a small, rural university, attends a class with local students, and presents a lecture to Malawian students at the Catholic University of Malawi. Students participate in cultural immersion activities while in Malawi. In Ecuador, the curriculum is a mixture of community service at local organizations, classroom guest lectures with local representatives, and cultural activities. In addition to the experience of volunteering, students also have the opportunity to engage with the native culture by living with host families and interacting with locals in Cuenca. This summer in Stellenbosch and Cape Town, South Africa, students have an opportunity to participate in one of three cooperating programs in education, health and HIV/AIDS care, and food insecurity. Students in these programs will be working directly in local schools, clinics, and with community organizations dedicated to improving access to services for vulnerable populations. For more information about these and many other education abroad programs led by UNC Charlotte faculty, please contact the Office of Education Abroad.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

It is always a great thing to see Niners band together to support amazing causes. Sean Langley and the Volunteer Outreach team have wonderful ways for Niner Nation to lend a helping hand this month.

NOVEMBER 16-27

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

This week includes the Speak Out Against Homelessness initiative presented with the quotes that will be seen outside of Atkins Library, the Niner Student Pantry grand opening with Chancellor Dubois, the Food Recycling Program which collects food that has not been cooked from campus cafeterias and then delivers it to the Charlotte Urban Ministries Center, the Sleep Out where students will sleep in the courtyard area of Lynch Hall, and the Stop Hunger Now event which provides food for disaster victims and school feeding programs around the globe.

Niner Nation Family

You should like this.
Christine Reed Davis – Dean of Students

Christine Reed Davis has big plans for the Dean of Students Office. Since she became associate vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students earlier this year, Davis, a veteran UNC Charlotte staffer, has pushed to make the office more accessible to students, parents and faculty. She’s had the office’s vision and mission statement updated to reflect this push. “We want to make the office as transparent as possible. We are here to help.”

Those are not empty words.

In her short tenure, Davis has overseen the expansion of the Latino Student Services, added a new Veterans Student Center in Barnard and updated the Dean of Students Office website, and there are many more projects on the horizon.

The Dean of Students Office serves as an advocate and guide for UNC Charlotte students as they move through the University. The office runs 10 programs designed to help students make the transition and flourish while here. Those programs are as diverse as they are encompassing, including Campus Outreach, Parent and Family Services, Fraternity & Sorority Life and others.

But students don’t always see all the office has to offer, and Davis says sometimes her department can be perceived as the “principals office.”

“Just because student conduct is dealt with in this office does not mean that the Dean of Students Office does not have more than just that to offer,” Davis said.

Having such a wide array of services at her disposal makes Davis one of the most influential people on campus. When a student has questions, concerns or problems, Davis and her staff can often find answers and get results quickly. But Davis admits that not everything is within the office’s power.

“When in doubt, go to the Dean of Students Office’ is definitely something that is perceived in the UNC Charlotte community,” she said. “Students, family and staff call the Dean of Students Office with the impression that we have authority over everything, which is not always the case; we are however, always able to redirect the person to where they need to go, even if it may not be with us.”

Davis is working to better explain how the Dean of Students Office operates and the services it offers. She’s doing this by reaching out to students one-on-one, through publications and updating brochures with helpful information. Since the office can be such a valuable tool, she hopes students realize all it has to offer and take full advantage of it.

“I want everybody to be aware of a little known fact that is within the walls of the Dean of Students Office. We are in the business of growing leaders,” she said. “We have a team of orientation counselors, Students Advising for Freshman Excellence counselors, Fraternity & Sorority Life leaders, our judicial branch (Student Government Association), Latino Student Services and so much more. Through all of our programs, Dean of Students is not only for crisis and punishment; we cultivate leaders and create opportunities.”

As Davis focuses on helping students, she is also keeping an eye on the future. And as UNC Charlotte grows, so must the Dean of Students Office. The office is currently looking to hire an administrative assistant for Veterans Affairs, an assistant dean and a business manager to oversee its more than $1 million budget.

“We have new staff positions opening up, and as the university population grows, this means the UNC Charlotte family grows, which also means there will be more students who need assistance and guidance on a variety of different levels,” she said. “We need enough staff to keep up with the growth. We are always looking for graduate assistants interested in being a part of the Dean of Students Office for reasons of both professional development and to serve the university population. Also, we need to be proactive to keep up with the growth. This means that we need to be on the cutting edge with technology and social media in order to serve our constituents. Many departments, including myself, can be found on Twitter for up to minute news on anything that affects the university community.”

– Ghada Ternanni
Where do I begin? It seems like it was just yesterday when I was a freshman at UNC Charlotte, and I blink my eyes and now my first-born is a freshman at our alma mater. I say “our” because it is where I met my husband. You might know him: Henry Williams Jr., the 49ers basketball all-time leading scorer! He spent most of his career in Italy, and therefore we only lived in Charlotte during the summers. Throughout his highly successful 10-year career, Henry won several championships, learned to speak fluent Italian and we had three children: Kristen, Lauren and Brice. However, we always missed home — at least I did.

So we were excited when we were able to finally set up roots in the area. Because of his career, we were not able to spend much time visiting campus, but we would drop by when time permitted. We enjoyed reminiscing and showing our kids where we met, lived on campus, etc.

What great times we had.

UNC Charlotte will always be a part of our family. We had no idea that our oldest daughter, Kristen, would keep the tradition going by attending the great UNC Charlotte.

It was the last school she decided to visit, but it became the most impactful. The only drawback from her perspective was that it was close to home, and she was ready to spread her wings. We visited schools from the mountains to the coast, but there was always something missing in them.

Kristen has always been a scholarly student and an exceptional track athlete, so she could’ve gone anywhere she wanted. But at the end of the day, she chose to give UNC Charlotte a try. Imagine our shock when we took an official tour of the school, not only had our daughter grown up but UNC Charlotte had as well. The campus was absolutely amazing: new buildings and housing; a football team; and new stadium and basketball arena on campus! By the way, what happened to Martin Village? That’s where I lived.

Kristen loves it, and she has not had a problem making the transition from high school to college. We are super proud of her. Don’t know if we’ll convince the other two to follow in her footsteps, but we’ll definitely try. We are definitely a Niner family!

Parking continued from page 4

to find a parking space in the high-demand lots and decks is 30-45 minutes.

Parking in a lower-demand area like North, South Village, or CRI decks or Lot 6 seems counter-intuitive at first but students who have tried it quickly realize that those areas have plenty of available parking and a shuttle stop nearby. Installing the free UNCCNextRide app (available for iOS and Android) provides real-time tracking and ETA of all campus shuttle routes. Parking farther out in a low-demand area ends up being easier, whether the student chooses to walk into the academic core or take the shuttle.

Watch our short video about parking in high demand versus lower demand areas. Parking doesn’t have to be ugly. But it can be funny!
UNC Charlotte Receives $2 Million Gift to Support New Marching Band

CHARLOTTE – Oct. 2, 2014 - First was football, and starting in fall 2015 the UNC Charlotte Marching Band will take the field. UNC Charlotte alumni Vickie and Gene Johnson have been the driving force behind the band, and they are donating $2 million to support the endeavor.

“The future well-being of our region is largely dependent on education, and anything we can do to enhance the work of UNC Charlotte is an investment in our future. Ultimately, success lies in the robust health of our educational systems. Education is a multi-faceted endeavor and an investment in the arts is as vital as any other area of study,” stated Gene Johnson. “We have seen, first-hand, the impact that the drum line has had on both students and alumni, and we are very excited to help expand this tradition. It is our hope the marching band will be a source of pride and excitement for all supporters of the 49ers. Vickie and I love UNC Charlotte, and it’s a privilege to be able to invest in its young people.”

Vickie and Gene Johnson, members of the classes of 1971 and 1973, have been generous and involved in the growth and progress of UNC Charlotte. Vickie Johnson has two degrees from UNC Charlotte and served on the Alumni Board of Directors. Gene Johnson served as president of the Alumni Board and on the Board of Trustees for eight years and was the first alumnus to chair the Trustees. In May 2014, he became the first alumnus to be awarded an honorary degree from UNC Charlotte.

The gift was announced at the site of the future Vickie and Gene Johnson Marching Band Center, which will be located between Storrs Hall and the Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts. Earlier this year, the University selected the architectural firm Watson, Tate, Savory to design the new 6,700-square-foot facility that will house the band’s musical instruments, uniforms and several offices. The Vickie and Gene Johnson Marching Band Center will be within walking distance of the field next to University City Boulevard (N.C. Highway 49), where the marching band will practice.

A portion of the Johnson’s gift will establish the Vickie and Gene Johnson Marching Band Scholarship Fund. Proceeds from a planned $4.5 million permanent endowment also will provide funding for scholarships to active members of the UNC Charlotte Marching Band. Another portion is designated to assist with the construction of the Johnson Marching Band Center.

Initially, the band will include 150 students and could grow to as many as 350 students. It will include students from across the University with perhaps 20 percent who are music majors to represent a full cross-section of the undergraduate student population. Jeffrey Miller joined UNC Charlotte in August 2014 as the inaugural associate director of bands/director of athletics bands. He will direct the 49er Basketball Band, conduct the Symphonic Band and the new marching band.

Ken Lamba, dean of the College of Arts + Architecture, noted, “This gift from Vickie and Gene Johnson is critical to building the marching band program at UNC Charlotte. Recruiting talented music students is as essential to team success as recruiting outstanding athletes, and with this gift, the Johnsons provide the foundation for a broader fundraising campaign to make the marching band a premiere part of our University’s spirit and culture.”

UNC Charlotte held a public campaign to solicit suggestions for the band’s name and received more than 300 submissions. “We were overwhelmed with the enthusiastic response to our naming campaign,” commented interim chair of the Department of Music, Jay Grymes. “Because of the large number of excellent suggestions, which keep coming in, we have decided to take extra time to name the UNC Charlotte marching band.”

The introduction of the marching band will coincide with the 49ers’ ascent into the elite Football Bowl Subdivision as a member of Conference USA in fall 2015.
All residents are eligible to process room changes into available highrise rooms, suites and apartments. Detailed instructions and information will be emailed to residents as well as posted at housing.uncc.edu.