

The GRIOT

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Colorado State University

Colorado Leadership for Equity, Advocacy and Discovering Social Justice (CO-LEADS)

By *Torshan Thomas*

This was my first year attending the CO-LEADS Conference, so I didn't really know what to expect, and I must say that I was pleasantly surprised. When I say pleasantly surprised, it was due to the many ways the conference was interactive and informational, the conference brought perspective to various views which



made it successful. I thought that it would be about diversity and diversity awareness, though that was covered in the workshops, I learned many new things. The most impacting discovery I took away from this conference is that so many of us spend so much time thinking about how we are suppressed but never think about the ways that we are privileged. I identify as a Christian, African American, heterosexual, able-bodied woman. When I go to places my religion is never questioned, my gender is never ques-

tioned, and my sexuality is never questioned. When I go places I don't have to worry about a building having ramps or whether or not its handicapped accessible. These things are all accepted by society and therefore are privi-

leges. To make this activity real, there were tables with a list of questions that you answer pertaining to yourself,

currently. If it pertained to you, you were to pick up a bead for a necklace that we would make at the end of the activity. When the activity finished, some students had string which were not even long enough for all the beads they had, while some of us only had enough beads to make bracelets. Looking around I came to a realization of how we take many things for granted everyday and how easily it is to forget that other people have it harder than you do within our society.

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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority *By Alexandria Norris*



An Alpha Kappa Alpha...
 The First and Finest for All to Behold.
 [The first to] change Black Women into Black Pearls.
 By merit and by culture is the motivation behind my strides.
 An Alpha Kappa Alpha woman will always walk with Pride.
 You see, being the Original Woman is not my only claim to Fame;
 Service to all Mankind is my most esteemed aim. I am the Original,
 giving consistently of myself, addressing pertinent issues, from
 AKAdemics to good health, who made a commitment to do good, A
 commitment to my people And my Sisterhood.
 I am the hope and the dream of the impoverished and unclean. When
 I grace the room you know the Pink and Green is on the scene. I am
 intelligent, beautiful, and sophisticated, A strong black woman, college
 trained and widely Educated.
 One time originated, three times imitated, but never, ever duplicated.
I am Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated!"(1).

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., an organization filled with empowered, strong, beautiful, and inspirational women that are known to some as Originals. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is a part of the 'The Divine Nine', a collection of nine historically African American, international Greek lettered fraternities and sororities that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council. The nine organizations being, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., **Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.**, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and the Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, was founded on January 15, 1908 at Howard University to cultivate and encourage high scholastic and ethical standards, while promoting unity and friendship among college women. Later, this empowering organization would be introduced to Colorado State University on May 1, 1982, officially welcoming the Xi Eta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Since 1982, the women of the Xi Eta chapter have been dedicated to providing "Service to ALL Mankind." They "promote unity and friendship among college women by listening to the needs of our community, and bridging the cultural gaps among our fellow students by raising awareness on the topic of diversity" (2). Their programs are based on their sorority's national initiatives; which are "geared towards: emerging young leaders (EYL) by providing leadership development and character building; health and personal fitness, increasing awareness on global poverty; providing resources and tools for economic and financial security; and addressing social justice and human rights by bringing awareness to human trafficking and domestic violence."(1) Currently the sorority has two active members on campus, Alexandria Grant and Alicia Griffin who are both extremely active in the academic community and Fort Collins community. The chapter has both a Twitter and Facebook pages, as well as a chapter website that provides contact information, resources, and upcoming events and services for the convenience of interested individuals. Their membership is comprised of distinguished women who are dedicated to maintaining excellent academic records, enhancing their leadership skills, and involvement in the global community through advocacy and service.

<http://www.gmu.edu/org/aka/poetry.html>

<http://aka-csu.webs.com/>





Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

By Edward Harlan



With Black Student Alliance's Annual Step Show upon us it seems like a great opportunity to take a brief look back on the histories of some of the great fraternities and sororities that make up the "Divine Nine". I chose to look at Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated (fondly known as the "Que's" or "Que Dogs") because they are the only African-American fraternity that is currently represented here at CSU. The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was found a little over 100 years ago on Friday, November 17th, 1911 at Howard University by three students by the names of Edgar Amos Love, Oscar James Cooper and Frank Coleman and they were advised by a biology professor named Ernest Everett Just.

I had the opportunity to speak to Keenan Bender, 22, who is currently our only "Q" on campus but continues to preserve the presence of the fraternity on campus among all of our students. He has been a member of Omega Psi Phi since May of 2010 but his ties to this great organization extend back to his childhood days. Growing up, Omega Psi Phi was the only fraternity that Keenan knew, being that both his grandfather and his great uncle were and continue to be members of Omega Psi Phi. In addition to hearing about the "Q's" from his grandfather, his mother also spoke about how great this organization was. So once Keenan became of age, there was no question about which fraternity he would pursue. Pursuing membership of this particular organization meant much more to Keenan than it might mean to other

people. Pursuing membership of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated meant that he would be able to pursue a part of his late grandfather that he was never able to meet.

Currently, the road to establishing a presence for his fraternity on Colorado State University's campus, and maintaining the presence that has already been established, is done through mentoring and "being out there". Being out there is the act of showing face and actually being physically present on campus, therefore our students can get to see what a good representation of a man of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated is supposed to look like.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

By Christin Slaughter

Reported by Trenice Copeland

Reading what Christin Slaughter had to say about the Delta's was heartwarming and inspiring. I am honored to know and share the importance of the Deltas on campus and what it truly means to be a part of the strong sisterhood from her perspective.

"The Tau Lambda Chapter was created because there was a strong sense that it was needed. Zeta Pi was the first collegiate chapter created in Colorado. It's a citywide chapter; students who went to school in Northern Colorado would have to drive to Denver to participate in the membership intake process. By creating another collegiate chapter it would benefit students who attended schools in Northern Colorado.

I remember in high school I heard about the Delta G.E.M.S. I decided to become involved in the program. I immediately fell in love with the sisterhood I saw when these women and how they were interacting with each other. Not only did the black women I see have high self-esteem but they also carried themselves with dignity. Delta G.E.M.S. opened my eyes to wonderful mentors, but also to the Greek community, and that was something I definitely wanted to be a part of. Coming to CSU and seeing the Deltas on campus only strengthened what I knew was in my heart.

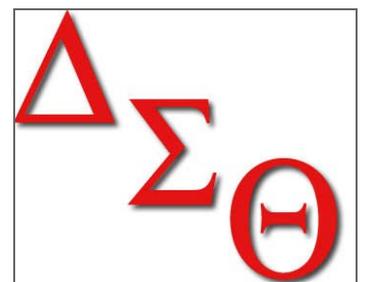
Some of my strongest values are kindness and making sure that the people around me are doing alright. I absolutely hate it when people are mean for no reason or just don't take others' feelings into consideration. Sisterhood is a major component within my sorority and we know that someone will always have our back no matter what.

Since joining my organization my mind-set has changed on many things. Giving back to my community is now at the forefront of my mind with many of the decisions I make. When I make decisions, I also am thinking about how others will be affected as a whole and not just me.

The membership intake process is a chance to learn about your strengths and weaknesses and also about learning how to work with others. The process not only taught me about what true sisterhood is, but I became more confident, and started speaking my mind more often. I held myself more accountable for how I interacted with others and letting my voice be heard.

Once I saw how the Deltas were involved in the community, who they were and that their values were so closely intertwined with mine, I never looked back."

-Christin Slaughter



Interview with Jesus Ornelas (Black Student Alliance President)

Interview by Kayla Tolbert

What attracted you or got you involved with the Black African American Cultural Center?

Well during my first year in college, James Bryant and Edward Harlan were in my cluster in Key Academic. I would come to the B/AACC office with them. But as far as becoming involved with Black Student Alliance, one of my friends was the President of Black Student Alliance by the name of Ashley Griffin. One day she pulled me aside and told me I should get a little more involved and make a difference through student organizations.

Tell us more about your involvement throughout the years in Black Student Alliance?

When I first joined BSA it was a little weird to me because of the cultural difference, but then again I liked the things BSA did, for instance they had an outreach to the community and inner city high schools such as Project Progress. During my sophomore and junior year in BSA, I was involved with Public Relations for BSA and I was really successful at getting recognition for the organization. Then at the end of my junior year, I was nominated for President because of leadership and it exhibited the opportunity for BSA to work more as a group. I wanted to change the past negativity among BSA members.

How do you feel about being the President of Black Student Alliance but self-identifying as Latino?

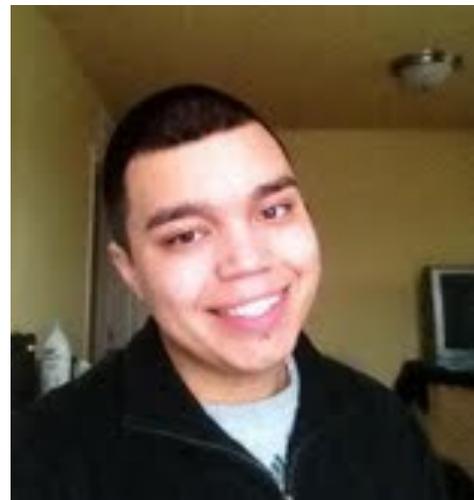
I am the first non-black president of BSA and I believe that it is something to be proud of. The fact that members in BSA felt reassured that I could represent them well and that I could be trusted, which made me feel honored.

Do you believe there is an interactive relationship between the African American community and Latino community? If not, how do you think it can improve?

There are some small relationships, yet there is still something which hinders us from being more interactive and there is a gap we should fill. It is unfortunate because we are such a small community here at CSU. One of my most happiest experiences have been getting to know various people who come to the Black African American Cultural Center as well as Black Student Alliance meetings.

What do you like most about the CSU community? How do you feel about the diversity on campus?

Even though the quality of diversity is getting better, I still believe there needs to be more diversity. It is good to see those who have had a hard time in high school come here to CSU and make a difference and I am happy to see a lot of programs that represent all the different cultures which you can learn about.



We understand that BSA is known for their Annual Step Show and you are in a fraternity, explain how being in a fraternity has impacted your life? What is the meaning of being in a fraternity to you?

My fraternity is shaped like a Divine Nine and I can relate to the NPHC Organization. There are many words to describe what a fraternity means, but if I could choose one it would be brotherhood. There is that feeling of connection to someone whom you don't know but want to get to know. In every meaning of the phrase it is something special to me. Fraternal life is not only for college years but something for life. I am very prideful and proud of it. Fraternity life has been one of the main reasons I have been able to grow and mature, as well as open myself up to new experiences that I would not have had if I had not joined a fraternity.

November 2012

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2 BSA Comedy Show @6	3 BSA Step Show @6:30
4	5	6 Real Talk @4pm	7 President's Council 12pm ROP Bowling Night @7-9pm	8 LDI @3pm	9	10 GPS @ 9am Volleyball vs. Fresno @ 1pm Football Vs. UNLV
11 Athletic Mentoring @6	12	13 Rites of Passage @3pm Real Talk @4pm	14 Black Def @ 12pm	15 Grad School Prep @12pm	16	17
18	19 Thanksgiving Break	20 Thanksgiving Break	21 Thanksgiving Break	22 Thanksgiving Break	23 Thanksgiving Break	24 Football vs. New Mexico
25	26	27 Rites of Passage @3pm Real Talk @4pm	28 Donald Wilson Mentoring @ 12 pm	29 LDI @3pm	30	