



New Duke sorority eschews traditional greek structure

Article from: [University Wire](#) | Article date: [February 8, 2000](#) | Author: [Melissa Lan](#)

Melissa Lan
University Wire
02-08-2000

(The Chronicle) (U-WIRE) DURHAM, N.C. -- There's a new sorority coming to town at Duke University, but Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Society, Inc. is trying to shatter the molds of traditionally black and white sororities.

Founded in 1997 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the sorority's representatives said they wanted to start a Duke chapter to shake up the existing system.

"[Duke has] a rich greek life steeped in tradition," said Jean O'Dette, a UNC senior and member the sorority, whose letters convey unity by resembling the word "ONE." "It was an opportunity to bring good things and traditions that traditionally black and white sororities have."

Trinity freshman Sheena Das agreed. "In the North, I had friends of all different races. People [here] hang out according to the race. That's why I feel really limited here," she said. "I wanted to break out of the box in the South."

Although ONE is not currently recognized by the University, sorority representatives are seeking provisional status for two years. After that, it is unclear how ONE would fit into Duke's existing structure.

UNC senior Mandy Greene, who is coordinating expansion to Duke, said the group does not want to be affiliated with the National Panhellenic Council, the organizing group for historically minority fraternities and sororities, or the Panhellenic Council, the umbrella organization for traditionally white sororities.

"It will take some reworking and some time of working with the greek system here," Greene said, noting that UNC has an organizational category for non-traditional fraternities and sororities.

Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Sue Wasiolek said this is the first time a sorority has come to campus with the mission of promoting diversity. "[I'm not sure] administratively how a sorority or sorority like it fits into the greek structure," she said. "The administration is taking it one step at a time."

As of now, there is one fraternity that is not affiliated with any greek umbrella group. Alpha Phi Omega, a non-selective community service fraternity, was initially funded by Duke Student Government, but is now independent.

NPHC President Justin Fairfax, however, said that affiliation with a larger group would provide structure for an organization just starting out. "NPHC, IFC or Panhel would make the organization accountable to Duke University," he said.

Regardless of how ONE will be classified eventually, the sorority-which has 28 members between its three chapters at UNC, UNC-Greensboro and North Carolina State University-is trying to attract attention now. Last week, 13 women attended two information sessions about the sorority.

"Duke will benefit from a multicultural organization like this," said Trinity sophomore Utaukwa Brown, who attended one of the meetings. "The traditional frats and sororities are so defined as black or white.... I'd rather have something about multiculturalism and learn about differences in other races."

If they do get settled at Duke, ONE's members hope to promote unity among greek organizations through service projects, multi-cultural lectures and monthly forums.

"We can plant the seed," O'Dette said, "[but] you just have to let [ONE] blossom."

(C) 2000 The Chronicle via U-WIRE

Provided by ProQuest LLC. For permission to reuse this article, contact [Copyright Clearance Center](#).

HighBeam™ Research, a part of The Gale Group, Inc. © Copyright 2010. All rights reserved.
www.HighBeam.com

The HighBeam advertising network includes: womensforum.com [GlamFamily](http://GlamFamily.com)