



New sorority hopes to break boundaries at Virginia Tech

Article from: [University Wire](#) | Article date: [November 1, 2000](#) | Author: [Kafia Hosh](#)

Kafia Hosh
University Wire
11-01-2000

(The Collegiate Times) (U-WIRE) BLACKSBURG, Va. -- An alternative to conventional greek sororities will soon be established at Virginia Tech. Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority is looking to open a chapter at Tech.

The idea to seek a multicultural sorority was conceived by Melissa Jo Murchison-Blake at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, during the spring of 1996.

As a biracial woman, Murchison-Blake did not want to limit herself to a sorority dominated by one race, she said.

On the sorority's Web site, she said, "I learned about sororities once I came to UNC, but felt that by joining one of the existing groups on campus, I'd be, in some way or another, giving myself a definition that was incomplete."

Along with six other women, Murchison-Blake pitched her idea for a multicultural sorority to the director of Greek affairs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In April of 1997, the school officially recognized Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority as the Alpha Chapter.

The sorority's mission is, "To promote leadership, multiculturalism and self-improvement through academic excellence, involvement in and service to the campus and community, as well as being living examples of sisterhood across different races, cultures, religions, backgrounds, and lifestyles," according to the Web site.

This mission was soon adopted at other universities as chapters of the sorority were founded at Duke University, North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Utah State University.

The Theta Nu Xi National Organization was founded in August of 1999, and consists of a diverse group of women with backgrounds ranging from Native American to Hispanic.

At a recent meeting held at Tech, Theta Nu Xi member, Amanda Greene, a senior at UNC Chapel Hill said, "I'm here on behalf of the National Organization to help found a chapter of Theta Nu Xi at Virginia Tech."

"I found Theta Nu Xi, as a mission of multicultural education, really compelling and valuable on a college campus," Greene said. "I was very impressed at the number of people this sorority appealed to and I'm really excited that there are so many women committed to bringing a different greek option to Virginia Tech."

The idea to establish a chapter of Theta Nu Xi at Virginia Tech was first initiated by Amrita Srinivas, a junior marketing major.

"Sororities didn't appeal to me before," Srinivas said. "I decided that Tech needed something different. A multicultural sorority would open up peoples' eyes to different cultural backgrounds and people would be more aware of different cultures," she said.

Srinivas began looking through the Web pages of different multicultural sororities and found one in New York and one in California, as well as Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority.

She chose Theta Nu Xi because "their Web page had a lot of good information and I liked the multiculturalism through the different pictures, links and the mission statement."

After surveying the campus interest in the sorority, Srinivas then began taking the steps to attempt to establish a chapter of Theta Nu Xi at Virginia Tech.

"Theta Nu Xi told me I had to write a proposal to them with statistics of the diversity on campus on starting a chapter at Tech," she said.

"I've been working with Ann Lamadrid, the National vice president, which further

concreted my ideas to start this here," she said.

For now, Theta Nu Xi is an interest group at Virginia Tech and has not been officially established. Female students that are interested in joining must go through the application process first.

Srinivas said the application process includes getting references and answering essays that relate to diversity, sisterhood, and a description of the benefits they could bring to the sorority.

Then, after going through formal phone interviews they are notified at the end of the semester if they are eligible to pledge. The pledge process begins right before spring and ends in mid-March.

Srinivas said she hopes to bond with different girls from different backgrounds and to make Tech aware of the values and traditions of other cultures.

"It's so nice to fall back on people you can trust and to have a close knit group of girls that can support you," she said.

"Theta Nu Xi helps you have an array of different people to go to for support," Srinivas said.

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