

FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES: Understanding Life Outcomes



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As Gallup continues to do further analysis on the national Gallup-Purdue Index study of 30,000 college graduates, many important questions remain. From the national report, we learned that graduates who were “emotionally supported” and had “experiential and deep learning” during college were much more likely to be engaged in their work and thriving in their well-being later in life. These crucial insights have already changed the conversation across the country about what matters in the student experience during college when it comes to long-term outcomes as a graduate. With a dataset this large, our research has just begun. And we are interested in learning about other experiences associated with long-term success in people’s lives and careers. This report focuses on those graduates who were members of fraternities or sororities.

From the national report, we know that extreme involvement in extracurricular activities and organizations is one of the six crucial elements associated with higher odds of workplace engagement and well-being later in life. Members of fraternities and sororities, not surprisingly, are significantly more likely to strongly agree they were extremely involved in extracurricular activities. It turns out, they are also more likely to report being emotionally supported and having experiential and deep learning. Additionally, college graduates who were members of fraternities or sororities are more likely to be engaged in work and thriving in all five elements of well-being compared with graduates who were not fraternity or sorority members.

Many factors could contribute to this finding, but the overall results suggest that the Greek experience could be beneficial for the vast majority of those involved in it. Fraternities and sororities will continue to face challenges associated with the bad behaviors of some chapters and some members, and Greek organizations nationally should certainly continue to focus their efforts to prevent things such as hazing, sexual assaults, and binge drinking. It will be important, though, to think carefully about the elements of “fraternity” that are most likely to be linked to these improved long-term outcomes — and for these organizations to continue to provide those positive experiences for their members and broader campus communities.



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INTRODUCTION

For years, the value of a college degree has been determined not by the most important outcomes of a college education, but by the easiest outcomes to measure — namely, job and graduate school placement rates and alumni salaries (usually only from their first job out of college). While these metrics have some merit, they do not provide a holistic view of college graduates' lives. These outcomes do not reflect the missions of higher education institutions, and they do not reflect the myriad reasons why students go to college.

Responding to the call for increased accountability among higher education institutions, Gallup and Purdue University focused their research efforts on outcomes that provide insight into the common and essential aspirations for college graduates, no matter what type of institution they attend. Together, Gallup and Purdue created an index that examines the long-term success of graduates as they pursue a good job and a better life. This index provides insight into the relationship between the college experience and whether college graduates have great jobs and great lives.

Additionally, Gallup partnered with the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) and the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) to research the relationship between membership in sororities and fraternities and those same college experiences.

WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT

Gallup's expertise on engagement in the workplace is rooted in more than 30 years of research on the 12 elements that best predict employee and workgroup performance.⁷

Engagement is more than job satisfaction. It involves employees being intellectually and emotionally connected with their organizations and work teams because they are able to do what they're best at, they like what they do at work, and they have someone who cares about their development at work.

Gallup's employee engagement index, based on responses to the 12 elements, categorizes workers as engaged, not engaged, or actively disengaged. People who are engaged at work are involved in and enthusiastic about their work. They are loyal and productive. Those who are not engaged may be productive and satisfied with their workplaces, but they are not intellectually and emotionally connected to them. Workers who are actively disengaged are physically present but intellectually and emotionally disconnected from their work and workplace. They are unhappy with their work, share their unhappiness with their colleagues, and are likely to jeopardize the performance of their teams.

Gallup studies show that worldwide, having a good job is one of the most important factors in life — because it occupies an enormous amount of people's time and their

⁷ *The Relationship Between Engagement at Work and Organizations Outcomes: Q12 Meta-Analysis*

self-identity.⁸ In the U.S., Americans enroll in higher education institutions to prepare themselves to attain that “good” job.⁹ Additional recent Gallup research shows that only 30% of Americans are engaged in their jobs, meaning that the U.S. workplace is missing staggering amounts of economic benefit that comes from workforces that are more engaged. If higher education does not lead graduates to an engaging job, then it has fallen down on a central expectation of students and their families who support them through college.

WELL-BEING

Well-being is the combination of all the things that are important to each individual — it is how people think about and experience their lives. A common misconception is to confine well-being to just some areas — to believe that well-being is only about being happy or wealthy, or to make it synonymous with physical health. Rather, it is about the interaction and interdependency between many aspects of life such as finding fulfillment in daily work and interactions, having strong social relationships and access to the resources people need, feeling financially secure, being physically healthy, and taking part in a true community.

Understanding the need for a metric for institutions to measure well-being and monitor its improvement, Gallup and Healthways have developed the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being 5 View. This survey is based on findings from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index and years of joint research.¹⁰ The Well-Being 5 View asks 10 questions to gauge well-being in five elements:

Purpose Well-Being: Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

Social Well-Being: Having strong and supportive relationships and love in your life

Financial Well-Being: Effectively managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security

Community Well-Being: The sense of engagement you have with the areas where you live, liking where you live, and feeling safe and having pride in your community

Physical Well-Being: Having good health and enough energy to get things done on a daily basis

Gallup categorizes people’s well-being in each of the elements as “thriving,” “struggling,” and “suffering,” based on their responses. Those who are thriving are strong, consistent, and progressing, while those who are struggling are moderate or inconsistent. Those who are suffering are at high risk. Because each of the elements of well-being is additive, an individual who is thriving in two elements should have a cumulative advantage over someone who is thriving in just one. Someone thriving in three of the five areas should have an even greater advantage, and so on.¹¹ For example, with some employers, Gallup has seen the annual health-related costs decrease incrementally according to how many well-being elements employees are thriving in. Thriving in all five areas is the pinnacle of well-being where individuals see the greatest advantage.

Previous Gallup research indicates that as of 2013, 29% of people in the U.S. are not thriving in any of these elements.¹² Understanding how people think about and experience their lives is one of the first steps in determining the appropriate interventions that organizations, communities, and higher education need to take to solve their biggest challenges. This research has the ability to provide colleges and universities with insight on how to improve the lives of current undergraduates in these key areas, which are within their control. While there is no one way to achieve high well-being, except through work and accountability — institutions can help provide their students with goals that are ultimately more fulfilling than income alone.

ALUMNI ATTACHMENT

Gallup’s research across hundreds of organizations in many industries shows that fully engaged customers buy

8 See *State of the American Workplace: Employee Insights for U.S. Business Leaders*, published 2013. Available online at <http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/163007/state-american-workplace.aspx>.

9 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) surveys

10 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/128186/Gallup-Healthways-Index-work.aspx>

11 Rath, T. & Harter, J. (2011). *The Economics of wellbeing*. Available online at <http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/126908/Economics-Wellbeing.aspx>

12 Study of 21,556 Gallup U.S. Panel Members (Weighted to U.S. Census Statistics), December 2013.

more, stay with you longer, and are more profitable than average customers — in good economic times and in bad. The Gallup-Purdue Index measures graduates' current emotional attachment to their alma mater by adapting Gallup's research on customer engagement to assess graduates' perceptions of their colleges both in retrospect to their undergraduate experiences and their views as current alumni.

Because students spend a significant amount of resources preparing for life outside of college, it is crucial to gauge whether the experiences they had in college have promoted a well-lived life. This includes if they perceive that the college was a great fit for them, having professors who cared and made learning exciting, and, most importantly, feeling that their school prepared them well for life outside of college.

The Gallup-Purdue Index uncovered which college experiences and perceptions are related to greater gains in the workplace and in well-being.



GALLUP-PURDUE INDEX SUMMARY RESULTS

Findings from the inaugural administration of the Gallup-Purdue Index — which includes interviews with more than 30,000 U.S. graduates — yield important insights for colleges, educators, employers, and students on the factors that contribute to these outcomes for college graduates.

Chief among these is that where graduates went to college — public or private, small or large, very selective or not selective — hardly matters at all to their current well-being and their work lives in comparison to their experiences in college.

Amongst these experiences, Gallup identified a core set that scored differently for those respondents who had higher workplace engagement and higher well-being. These experiences are grouped together in two broad groups — emotional support and deep and experiential learning. Each of these groups is comprised of three key experiences outlined below and relate very strongly to the life outcomes that were measured.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Respondents who answered “Strongly Agree” to each of the emotional support items had significantly different outcomes in engagement and well-being:

“At least one professor who made me excited about learning”

“Professors cared about me as a person”

“A mentor who encouraged my goals and dreams”

Each of these experiences are important on their own, but together, graduates who were emotionally supported during college have more than double the odds of being engaged in their work and are nearly three times as likely to be thriving in their well-being.

EXPERIENTIAL AND DEEP LEARNING

Respondents who answered “Strongly Agree” to each of the experiential and deep learning items also had significantly different outcomes in engagement and well-being:

“Long-term project taking a semester or more to complete”

“Internship or job where applied learning”

“Extremely involved in extracurricular activities and organizations”

Again, each of these experiences are important on their own, but together, graduates who had experiential and deep learning during college have more than double the odds of being engaged in their work, and more are thriving in their lives.



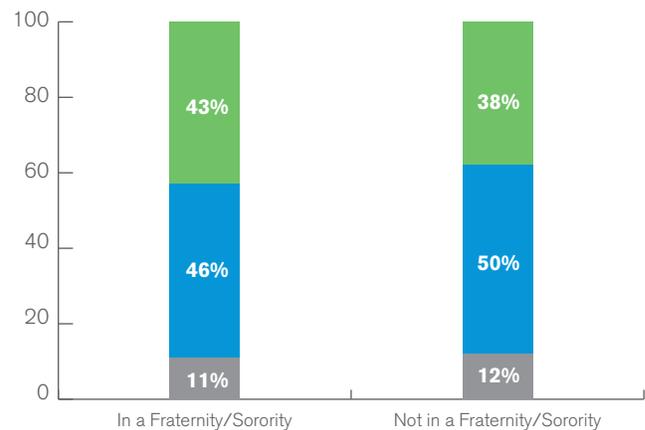
FRATERNITY AND SORORITY MEMBERSHIP

In partnership with the NIC and NPC, Gallup researchers identified similarities and differences between college graduates who were members of a fraternity or sorority and all other college graduates on key measurements of great jobs and great lives. Sixteen percent of all college graduates were members of a fraternity or sorority while attending their alma mater, providing researchers an opportunity to evaluate how sorority and fraternity members differ from all other college graduates on these metrics.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The majority (55%) of all fraternity and sorority members surveyed in the Gallup-Purdue Index study are employed full time for an employer. Overall, 43% of fraternity and sorority members who are employed full time for an employer are engaged in the workplace, compared to 38% of all other college graduates. A smaller percentage of fraternity and sorority members are not engaged (46% vs. 50%), and nearly equal percentages of fraternity and sorority members and all other college graduates are actively disengaged (11% vs. 12%). Differences in engagement between fraternity and sorority members and all other college graduates are statistically significant when controlling for key demographic characteristics including gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as measured by first generation education status.

ENGAGEMENT INDEX



ENGAGED **NOT ENGAGED** **ACTIVELY DISENGAGED**

WELL-BEING

Fraternity and sorority members are more likely than all other college graduates to be thriving in each of the five elements of well-being (purpose, social, financial, community, and physical).

More fraternity and sorority members are thriving in purpose than in any other element of well-being. These fraternity and sorority members like what they do every day and get to learn or do something interesting on a daily basis, which is why the majority (59%) are thriving in this element of well-being.

More fraternity and sorority members are thriving in the element of social well-being than all other college graduates. More than half (54%) of fraternity and sorority members have strong relationships with friends and family that lead them to be thriving in the area of social well-being, compared to less than half of all other college graduates (48%).

Similarly, fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be thriving in the element of financial well-being than all other college graduates (46% vs. 42%).

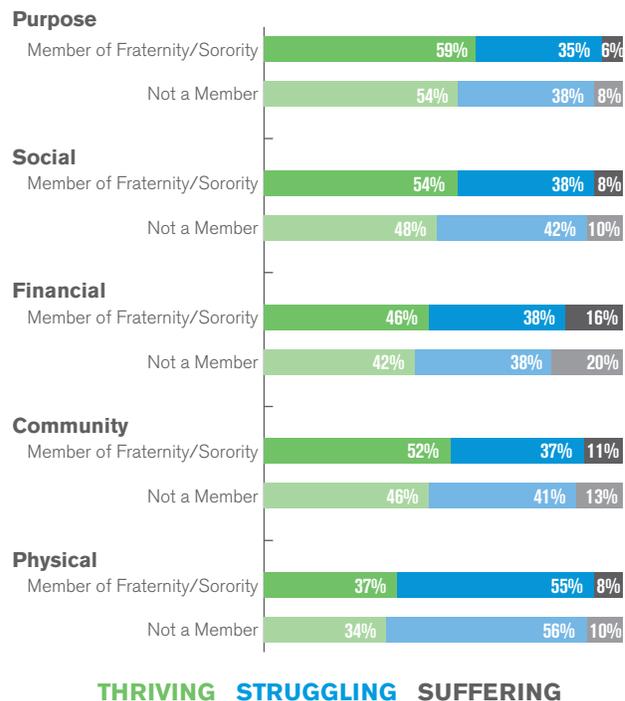
Fraternity and sorority members are also more likely to be thriving in community well-being than all other college graduates (52% vs. 46%). Exposure to volunteer opportunities via the Greek network may contribute to the differences identified in community well-being for fraternity and sorority members and all other college graduates.

Although fraternity and sorority members are more likely to be thriving in the element of physical well-being than all other college graduates (37% vs. 34%), fewer fraternity and sorority members are thriving in physical well-being than in any other element.

Additionally, fewer fraternity and sorority members are thriving in none of the elements than are their non-fraternity and non-sorority peers (13% vs. 18%).

Differences in well-being between fraternity and sorority members and all other college graduates are statistically significant when controlling for key demographic characteristics including gender, race/ethnicity, and

socioeconomic status as measured by first generation education status.



KEY EXPERIENCES

Emotional Support

More fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they had professors who cared about them as a person, one who made them excited about learning, and had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their dreams, than all other college graduates (16% vs. 13%).

Although fraternity and sorority members and other college graduates nearly tie on the percentage that strongly agree their professors cared about them as a person, more fraternity and sorority members say they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning (66% vs. 63%) and had a mentor who encouraged their goals and dreams (25% vs. 21%). When controlling for key demographics characteristics including gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as measured by first generation education status, only differences between the percentages that report they had a mentor who encouraged their goals and dreams remain.

	MEMBERS (% STRONGLY AGREE)	NON- MEMBERS (% STRONGLY AGREE)
At least one professor who made me excited about learning	66	63
Professors cared about me as a person	28	26
A mentor who encouraged my goals and dreams	25	21

Experiential and Deep learning

More fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they had a long-term project that took a semester or more to complete, that they had an internship or job where they applied what they were learning, and that they were extremely involved in extracurricular activities and organizations, than other college graduates (11% vs. 5%).

Although fraternity and sorority members and other college graduates nearly tie on the percentage that strongly agree that they had a long-term project that took a semester or more to complete, and that they had an internship or job where they applied what they were learning, more fraternity and sorority members strongly agree that they were extremely involved in extra-curricular activities and organizations (39% vs. 16%). Extreme involvement indicates that these fraternity and sorority members took advantage of extracurricular activities and organizations beyond their fraternity or sorority.

	MEMBERS (% STRONGLY AGREE)	NON- MEMBERS (% STRONGLY AGREE)
Long-term project taking a semester or more to complete	32	32
Internship or job where applied learning	31	29
Extremely involved in extra-curricular activities and organizations	39	16

ADDITIONAL RESULTS

Alumni Attachment

Alumni who were members of a fraternity or sorority exhibit higher emotional attachment to their alma mater, meaning that they strongly agree that their college or university was the perfect school for them, and they can't imagine a world without it. Twenty-two percent of fraternity and sorority members are emotionally attached to their alma mater, compared with 17% of all other college graduates.

Student loans

More fraternity and sorority members took out no student loans to pay for their undergraduate education than all other college graduates (58% vs. 51%). The higher student loan burden associated with all other college graduates may contribute to differences in financial well-being between these two groups.

Entrepreneurship

More fraternity and sorority members report that they have started a business than all other college graduates (28% vs. 23%). Again, differences in loan burden may be associated with differences in overall entrepreneurship rates between these two groups, as the Gallup-Purdue Index revealed college graduates with higher amounts of student loans were less likely to have started a business.

Prepared for life after college

More fraternity and sorority members (37%) strongly agree that their institution prepared them for life after college than all other college graduates (27%).

METHODOLOGY

Results for the Gallup-Purdue Index are based on Web surveys conducted Feb. 4–March 7, 2014, with a random sample of 29,560 respondents with a bachelor’s degree or higher, aged 18 and older, with Internet access, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, and 5,137 fraternity and sorority members.

The Gallup-Purdue Index sample was compiled from two sources — the Gallup Panel and the Gallup Daily Tracking survey.

The Gallup Panel is a proprietary, probability-based longitudinal panel of U.S. adults that are selected using random-digit-dial (RDD) and address-based sampling methods. The Gallup Panel is not an opt-in panel. The Gallup Panel includes 60,000 individuals. Panel members can be surveyed by phone, mail, or Web. Gallup Panel members with a college degree and with access to the Internet were invited to take the Gallup-Purdue Index survey online.

The Gallup Daily tracking survey sample includes national adults with a minimum quota of 50% cellphone respondents and 50% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within regions. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using RDD methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday. Gallup Daily tracking respondents with a college degree and who agreed to future contact, were invited to take the Gallup-Purdue Index survey online.

Gallup-Purdue Index interviews are conducted via the Web, in English only. Samples are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, and region. Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. bachelor’s degree or higher population.

All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting. For results based on the total sample of fraternity and sorority members, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on employee engagement of fraternity and sorority members, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

FOR COMPLETE INDEX RESULTS, VISIT:

[HTTP://PRODUCTS.GALLUP.COM/168857/](http://products.gallup.com/168857/)

[GALLUP-PURDUE-INDEX-INAUGURAL-](http://products.gallup.com/168857/gallup-purdue-index-inaugural-national-report.aspx)

[NATIONAL-REPORT.ASPX.](http://products.gallup.com/168857/gallup-purdue-index-inaugural-national-report.aspx)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT GALLUP

Gallup delivers forward-thinking research, analytics, and advice to help leaders solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 75 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of the world's constituents, employees, and customers than any other organization. Gallup consultants help private and public sector organizations boost organic growth through measurement tools, strategic advice, and education. Gallup's 2,000 professionals deliver services at client organizations, through the Web, and in nearly 40 offices around the world.

ABOUT THE NORTH-AMERICAN INTERFRATERNITY CONFERENCE (NIC)

Founded in 1909, the North-American Interfraternity Conference is the trade association representing 74 International and National Men's Fraternities. The NIC serves to advocate the needs of its member fraternities through enrichment of the fraternity experience; advancement and growth of the fraternity community; and enhancement of the educational mission of the host institutions. The NIC is also committed to enhancing the benefits of fraternity membership through its relationship with Interfraternity Councils. Today, the NIC has 74 member organizations with approximately 5,500 chapters located on 800+ campuses in the United States and Canada with approximately 350,000 undergraduate members. The NIC is led by a Board of Directors comprised of nine volunteers from member fraternities. The headquarters and professional staff are located in Indianapolis, Indiana. You can connect with the NIC on Twitter and Facebook.

ABOUT LUMINA FOUNDATION

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina's outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency for action to achieve Goal 2025.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PANHELLENIC CONFERENCE (NPC)

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), one of the largest organizations advocating for women, is the umbrella group for 26 national and international sororities. NPC sororities are located at 665 campuses with 325,772 undergraduate members in 3,127 chapters. Alumnae are represented in 3,883 associations throughout the world. For more information, including a complete list of NPC sororities, visit <http://www.npcwomen.org> or find NPC on Twitter and Facebook.

ABOUT PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Purdue University is a vast laboratory for discovery. The university is known not only for science, technology, engineering, and math programs, but also for our imagination, ingenuity, and innovation. It's a place where those who seek an education come to make their ideas real – especially when those transformative discoveries lead to scientific, technological, social, or humanitarian impact.

Founded in 1869 in West Lafayette, Indiana, the university proudly serves its state as well as the nation and the world. Academically, Purdue's role as a major research institution is supported by top-ranking disciplines in pharmacy, business, engineering, and agriculture. More than 39,000 students are enrolled here. All 50 states and 130 countries are represented.

ABOUT HEALTHWAYS

Healthways is an independent, global well-being company that provides comprehensive improvement solutions to increase performance and lower healthcare costs in its client populations. Dedicated to creating a healthier world one person at a time, Healthways uses the science of well-being and behavior change to produce and measure well-being improvement for its customers. Healthways provides personalized support to individuals to optimize each participant's health and productivity and to reduce health related costs, and also advises leaders on how to maximize well-being across an organization.

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