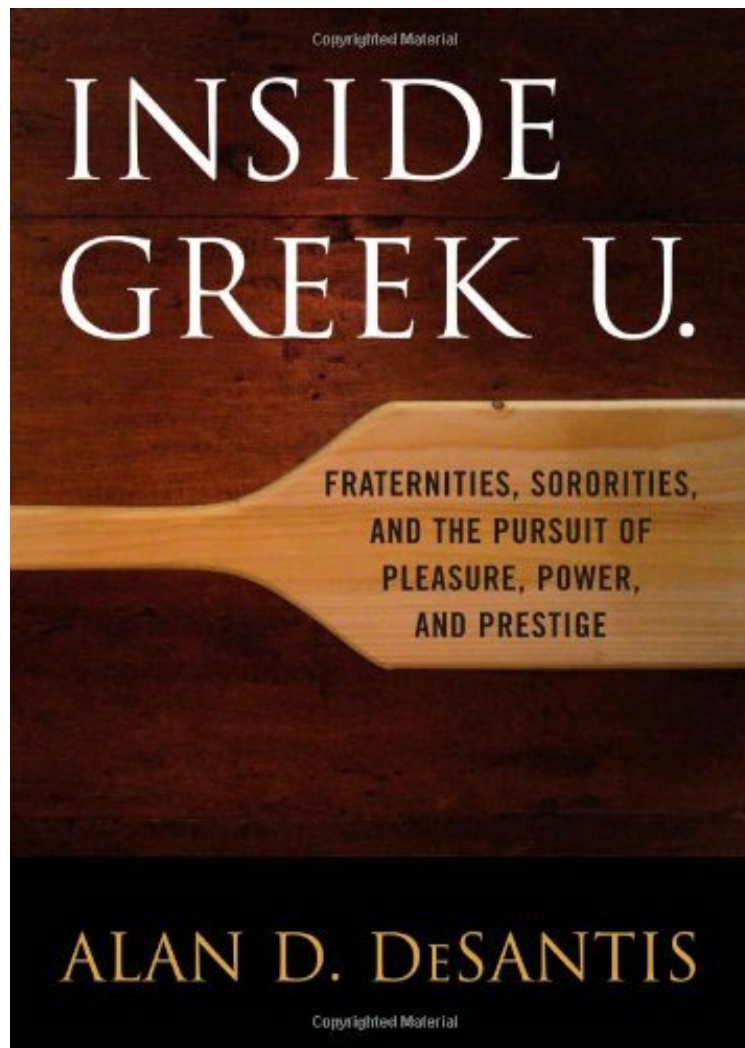


Inside Greek U.: Fraternities, Sororities, and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige

Alan D. DeSantis

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Alan D. DeSantis : Inside Greek U.: Fraternities, Sororities, and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inside Greek U.:
Fraternities, Sororities, and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Eye-Opening but HonestBy Get RealA very honest and objective review and analysis of the Greek system at a large university. It reminded me why I chose NOT to join a fraternity when I was a student, but confirms the many life-long bonds that are established among brothers and sisters that I observe even today. DeSantis used his long-time associations with the Greek system to gain access to information and

to members, and was clever enough to conduct interviews in a manner that would maximize openness and honesty. Nevertheless, there were times I wish he had dug a deeper, using personal follow-up interviews to not only unravel sex roles/stereotypes, but the rationale and personal history the led students to certain decision and viewpoints. For example, how and why do individuals decide to go Greek, and how are those individuals different from those that reject the Greek system. Most differentiation is made after matriculation based on grades. Also, DeSantis does not often distinguish between trends that are specific to Greek organizations, and trends on college campuses themselves regarding drugs, sex, and drinking. As a result, it sometimes implies that certain activities occur among Greeks, but not the student population at large. For example, 75-80% (or more.... "you'd be surprised at the real numbers") of girls in sororities may have anal sex, but is that any different among non-Greeks? And if a group of girls agrees that that's true, but no one admits to trying it, wouldn't you probe that a little more in personal interviews to validate the group comments??? All-in-all though, this is the best analysis I have read of the status of the Greek system in American colleges. It's explicit but honest. I have a high school junior who is now in the process of selecting potential colleges, and she has expressed an interest in learning about sororities (and college life in general). I gave her the book to give her a realistic picture of college life and what she might encounter. I would recommend this book to parents (former Greeks and non-Greeks) and to their sons and daughters who are about to take the plunge!

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent look at the intersection between gender, youth and the Greek system
By Beth Livingston
Dr. Desantis paints an eloquent and well-researched picture of the current Greek culture at a large American university. His methodology produces rich description and illustrates all sides of Greek life--from the positive to the negative to the intriguing. The book does a great job of contrasting the ways in which fraternities and sororities differ, and Dr. Desantis--as a Greek himself--has a unique perspective on Greek culture. No doubt that any parent of a student who is currently Greek or considering pledging would find this an interesting read, as would any academic or administrator looking to better understand his or her student body. Current Greek students may find the bluntness of the descriptions to be unarming, as much of what is described often goes unspoken, especially to those who are not Greek. However, Dr. Desantis' book is cutting edge and honest--and all readers would find it worth the buy. "Inside Greek U" reads well and quickly and leaves all readers with a broader understanding of how gender and youth interact in the unique environment that is Greek life. (and PS: I loved it!)

11 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Confirms stereo-typical views of Greek community
By DACHokie
Having joined a fraternity in the 1980s and still living in the town where I graduated from college, I thought this book was going to be an interesting read. Although Desantis did his homework and cites a great deal of supporting research, his final product does nothing more than underscore all the negative public perceptions about the Greek system ... that it IS as shallow as the majority of the "outsider" population perceives, with very, very few exceptions. Am I surprised with the findings? Yes and no. Yes, I am surprised that the Greek system I embraced twenty years ago has become so superficial and by today's standards, unnecessary. But, no, I am not surprised that today's students exhibit such simple and selfish behavior, combined with a total lack of awareness to the world around them (regardless of the global reach of the internet) ... it is symbolic of the me-first attitude today's youth culture. There is little shock value in Desantis' work, but maybe it's because living in a college town has de-sensitized me to college students' in general or more likely, I've outgrown the idiotic behavior I exhibited myself so long ago. I think the book would have been a better read had he used actual fraternities and schools (maybe a legal liability decision?). The "Greek U", "John from Alpha fraternity", "Susie from Theta sorority" was too generic an approach to the subject matter ... it was actually a turn-off for me for authenticity reasons; it reads like fiction. The comments/responses/behaviors weren't exclusively Greek-related ... any group of students could have provided the same material covered in this book. In other words, what differentiates the men from "Alpha fraternity" from a group of guys living on the same floor in a dorm or a group of varsity athletes. This book had potential, but I found it disappointing in that it echoes all the same lame Greek stereotypes. It might have been better to look at how Greek organizations have grown/changed throughout the years to let the reader know that today's generation of Greeks are not symbolic of all Greeks, but more or less a snapshot of today's youth culture. Desantis' work appears to be no more than a conglomeration of Newsweek/Time/Rolling Stone articles on binge-drinking, eating disorders and date rape ... I really expected a lot more.

Popular culture portrays college Greek organizations as a training ground for malevolent young aristocrats. Films such as *Animal House*, *Revenge of the Nerds*, *Old School*, and *Legally Blonde* reinforce this stereotype, but they fail to depict the enduring influence of these organizations on their members. *Inside Greek U*. provides an in-depth investigation of how fraternities and sororities bolster traditional, and potentially damaging, definitions of gender and sexuality. Using evidence gathered in hundreds of focus group sessions and personal interviews, as well as his years of experience as a faculty advisor to Greek organizations, Alan D. DeSantis offers unprecedented access to the world of fraternities and sororities. DeSantis, himself once a member of a fraternity, shows the profoundly limited gender roles available to Greeks: "real men" are taught to be unemotional, sexually promiscuous, and violent; "nice girls," to be nurturing, domestic, and pure. These rigid formulations often lead to destructive attitudes and behaviors, such as eating disorders, date rape, sexual misconduct, and homophobia. *Inside Greek U*. shows that the Greek experience does not

end on graduation day, but that these narrow definitions of gender and sexuality impede students' intellectual and emotional development and limit their range of choices long after graduation. Ten percent of all college students join a Greek organization, and many of the nation's business and political leaders are former members. DeSantis acknowledges that thousands of students join Greek organizations each year in search of meaning, acceptance, friendship, and engagement, and he illuminates the pressures and challenges that contemporary college students face. *Inside Greek U.* demonstrates how deeply Greek organizations influence their members and suggests how, with reform the worst excesses of the system, fraternities and sororities could serve as a positive influence on individuals and campus life.

"This book is unique, provocative, and troubling, and it will stimulate quite a bit of conversation. It is a snapshot of four important years in the lives of those who may one day become the business, political, and legal leaders of our nation." Cindy Griffin, author of *Feminist Rhetorical Theories* "The strengths of this work lie in the careful presentation of the students' words, actions, and feelings, as well as the link DeSantis makes to the sheer presence of Greeks in today's business, political, and legal systems." Cindy Griffin, author of *Invitation to Public Speaking* "This book provides a vivid description of gender templates for identity and associated behavior in the Greek System of a University." Peggy Reeves Sanday, author of *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege* "Alan DeSantis has uncovered behavior that adds to the growing evidence of troubling flaws in the American understanding of masculinity and the concomitant injustices associated with the performance of masculinity/femininity in elitist fraternity/sorority settings." Peggy Reeves Sanday, author of *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege* "No other book treats the Greek system as fully as *Inside Greek U.* It is at once critical and sympathetic, showing an unparalleled understanding of perspectives of the young men and women in the Greek system." Scott F. Kiesling, co-editor of *Intercultural Discourse and Communication: The Edge* "[DeSantis'] book is . . . a clear and mostly readable overview that winds up with surprising conclusion that fraternities and sororities aren't so bad after all." *New York Times* "Many books on the subject tend to fall into sensational, expose territory, but DeSantis' takes a more thoughtful, academically critical view, examining how gender roles and behaviors in particular affect and influence young men and women. It provides practical suggestions at all levels of academia to improve Greek organizations and minimize the harm they cause. A system that wields this much power needs greater scrutiny and understanding, and DeSantis is qualified to provide it he possesses an insider's knowledge and access, and as an academic, he understands how the messages cultivated and promoted by the Greek system filter into society at large, and how our culture internalizes and reinforces those messages." Candice Jackson, *Lexington Herald-Leader* "Always respectful of his participants, DeSantis produces a sympathetic work that seeks to help future members of Greek organizations to critique and avoid the often harmful gender ideals that fraternities and sororities can perpetuate. This book should be required reading for college students thinking about pledging a fraternity or a sorority." *Library Journal* "DeSantis draws upon his 25 years of experience with Greeks and argues that reforming fraternities and sororities is both possible and necessary. He delivers an account guaranteed to raise eyebrows and spark conversations in fraternity and sorority houses, as well as administration buildings across the country." *Kentucky Alumni* "The book was a good read. Those not familiar with Greek life or the issues presented may find the book helpful." David S. Williams II, *Journal of College Student Development* "This is powerful information, and for lawyers who interface with the Greek system, either as university counsel or as an attorney prosecuting or defending a particular house or member, DeSantis's book is sure to become "must reading." But even those not so employed will find it engaging and though provoking." Robert M. Jarvis, *Journal of Law and Education*

About the Author Alan D. DeSantis is professor of communications at the University of Kentucky. He has published numerous journal articles in publications such as *Health Communication*, the *International Journal of Refugee Studies*, and the *Journal of Communication and Religion*.