

Response to "There is a lack of diversity in Greek Life"

by Braden Butka, Josh Darst, Norman Hurt Jr., Josh Hutchinson and Olivia Murray | Contributors | @longwoodrotunda

An opinions piece published last week had many Greek organizations asking themselves, "were we really so unsupportive of underrepresented groups?" Had we missed something that could be tied back to almost all of our individual organizations central tenets?

Looking at the Greek community, it is understandable to say that we aren't as diverse as we could be. It isn't that we aren't trying to make strides in terms of diversity, equity and

or who they fall in love with because at the end of the day the Greek community knows that what really matters is "... the content of their character."

Data aside, the Interfraternity Council, College Panhellenic Council (CPC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) and Gamma Rho Lambda, the younger and smaller multicultural Greek organization, wish to use this opinions piece as an opportunity to stand in solidarity with the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion.

We can't atone for the sins of our grandfathers and their fathers since our nation's founding, but what we can do is act, here and now. Going forward the IFC, CPC,

NPHC and Independent Greek Councils are here to foster the environment we want to see by supporting the student diversity statement.

As noted in the diversity statement crafted in 2016 by students, "we strive to foster an environment of respect and mutual understanding that moves beyond mere tolerance to the genuine valuing of diversity."

We shall strive to attain this through our ongoing campus programming, recruitment of diverse and inclusive members and a holistic self-evaluation of our practices to ensure we are operating in an equitable way to all people.

"We strive to foster an environment of respect and mutual understanding that moves beyond mere tolerance to the genuine valuing of diversity."



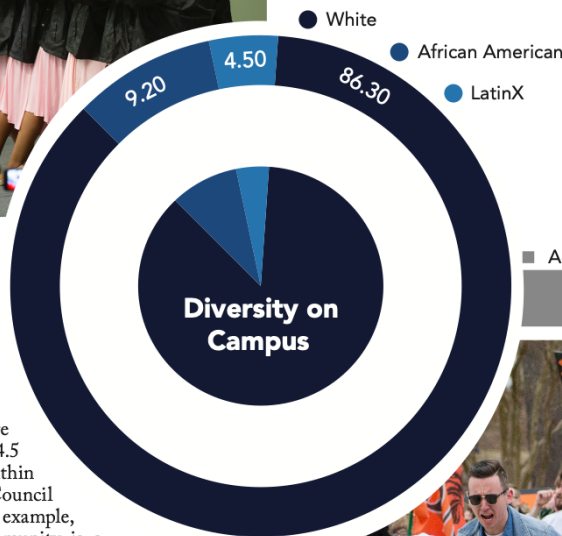
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. held their reveal on April 7.

inclusion, but rather that we are a product of our environment.

When looking at the Longwood University community, as of 2016, only 9.2 percent are African American and 4.5 percent are LatinX. Within the Interfraternity Council (IFC) community, for example, 14 percent of the community is a part of those underrepresented groups.

These numbers only take a look at diversity in terms of what is skin deep, which we know isn't an accurate indicator of what true diversity represents.

The Greek community has a multitude of LGBTQ+ members and members who identify across platforms beyond just white and colored skin. We can't change who decides to accept or decline a bid, or show up for recruitment in the first place; what we can do is make sure that we present ourselves in a genuine light of welcoming to all and make sure no one feels judged for things they cannot change about themselves like their ability, the color of their skin, their parents' backgrounds



Types of Greek Life

Academic	Honorary	Service	Social
19	16	1	23



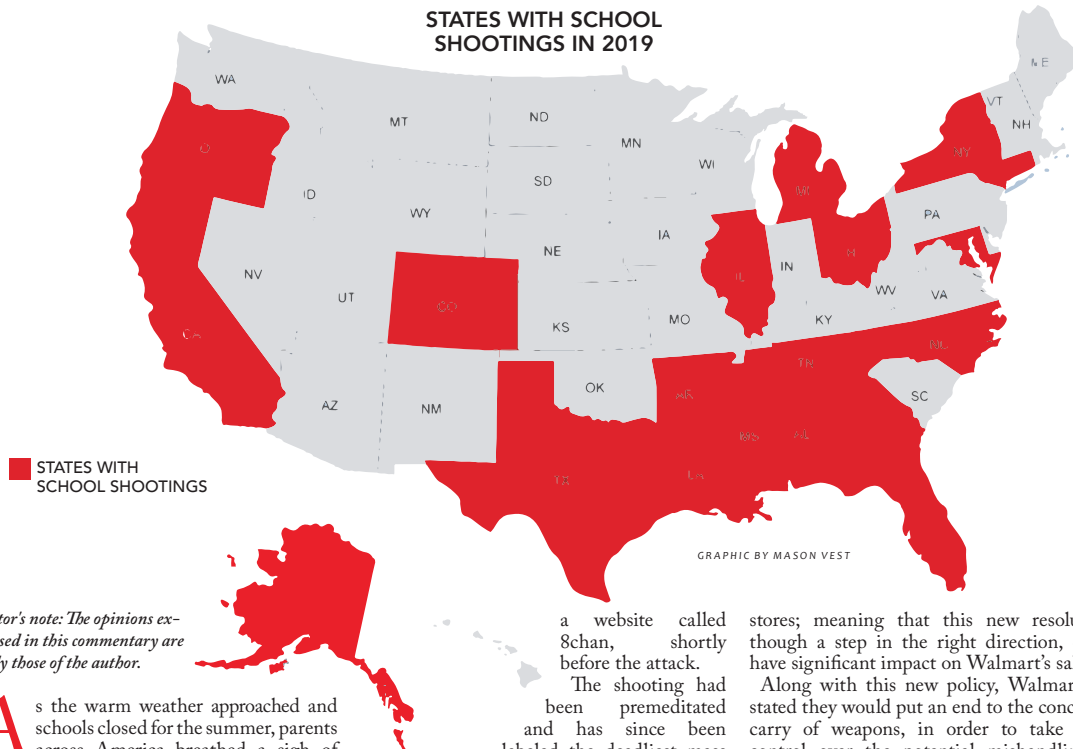
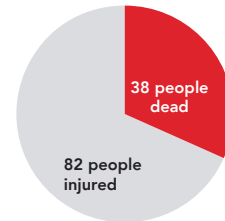
TAYLOR O'BERRY | FILE PHOTO

Brothers of Theta Chi Fraternity welcomed a new pledge at the Interfraternity Council (IFC) Men's Walk on Feb. 1, 2019 behind Lankford Student Union.

Gun violence in America: Enough is enough

This summer's mass shootings stir up a call for action against gun violence

by Davina Applewhite | Opinions Staff | @longwoodrotunda



Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

As the warm weather approached and schools closed for the summer, parents across America breathed a sigh of relief with the thought that their children would be safe from the recent influx of mass school shootings, taking place nationwide.

On July 26, CNN reported that there had been 22 school shootings across the United States since the beginning of 2019.

These shootings resulted in the loss of life and injuries of more than ten students.

Unfortunately and unsurprisingly, the safety of summer was merely an illusion to parents and students alike, because in the month of August alone, mass shootings have continued to transpire in places such as a busy street, a municipal building and a Walmart.

On Aug. 4, a Walmart in El Paso, Texas was disturbed by gunshots fired by a man named Patrick Crusius.

According to the New York Times, Crusius killed twenty-two people and injured another 26 in his rampage.

Authorities apprehended Crusius and discovered that he had written an anti-immigrant manifesto, which was posted on

a website called 8chan, shortly before the attack.

The shooting had been premeditated and has since been labeled the deadliest mass shooting to occur in 2019, thus far.

Just one day later, another devastating mass shooting took place across the country.

In just 32 seconds, a gunman opened fire in the middle of a crowded street, managing to kill nine people and injure 27 others, on Aug. 4, in Dayton, Ohio.

Police arrived at the scene, killing the gunman and putting a stop to his reign of terror.

The shooter in question was 24-year-old Connor Betts.

Bett's sister, Megan, was among one of the victims who were fatally shot.

Many ask what needs to be done to prohibit and prevent more mass shootings in the United States.

Following the shooting in El Paso, Walmart stores have made the decision to stop selling ammunition and eventually stop selling handguns as well.

According to The Washington Post, Walmart sells guns in about half of its U.S.

stores; meaning that this new resolution, though a step in the right direction, could have significant impact on Walmart's sales.

Along with this new policy, Walmart has stated they would put an end to the concealed carry of weapons, in order to take more control over the potential mishandling of guns brought into their stores.

Furthermore, cities, like San Francisco, have also decided to take a stand against the gun violence that has been happening in the last few months.

The California City, has declared the National Rifle Association (NRA) as a domestic terrorist group, due to the recent mass shootings and the pressure on the NRA to create stricter forms of gun control.

More and more Americans are dying frequently as a result of gun violence and citizens are becoming more and more divided on their stance.

Whether it be declaring the NRA as a terrorist organization or making guns less available to the public, there is no denying that something must be done to put a stop to the recent influx in mass shootings across the United States and the decision must be done quickly to prevent further tragic incidents that have taken place this summer.

There's something otherworldly to "Joker." Its dingy color palette and 1.78:1 aspect ratio conflicts everything that past comic book movies have done. It's small, cramped, claustrophobic and mean. This is a dangerous and upsetting film, not for the faint of heart.

Joaquin Phoenix ("Her," "You Were Never Really Here") is positively electric as Arthur Fleck. His performance is impeccable and will likely grab a lot of awards talk come next year's Oscars, but there's something about his performance, it's detached and raw, and it feels real in a scary way. At times it doesn't feel like an actor playing a role; instead, in the film's most jarring moments, it just feels like watching a person live.

This is a testament to Phoenix's talent, but also to the work that he, Writer/Director Todd Phillips ("War Dogs," "The Hangover") and Co-Writer Scott Silver ("8 Mile," "The Fighter") have taken to make sure the film never glorifies the actions and inspirations for them. Rather, they take ample time in showing the puzzle pieces that build to eventually create this shattered man.

If Arthur felt happy about an action, the film shows that, and succeeds in not painting the action either way, leaving it up to the audience to decide. There's an explicit difference between showing the events and glorifying them and Phillips seems to understand this completely.

Pacing also helps in telling his tale in just the right way, and the film ends up beginning with a very slow burn. While initially moving slowly and deliberately, the latter half quickens things up quite a bit as more and more things start to spark and explode at the same time. An excellent musical score from Hildur Guðnadóttir ("A Hijacking," "Chernobyl") meshes with cinematography from Lawrence Sher ("Godzilla: King of the Monsters," "The Hangover") that is at times understated and grandiose. Both are excellent.

Also excellent is Robert De Niro ("Casino," "Goodfellas"), delivering an excellent performance and almost becoming an audience surrogate in the latter half of the film. He doesn't get as much screen time as Phoenix, but the work he does with it is just as good.

While Phoenix steals the show, the supporting cast feels utilized mostly well. Brian Tyree Henry ("Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse," "If Beale Street Could Talk") serves as more of a cameo than was initially suggested, and Brett Cullen ("Person of Interest," "42") as Thomas Wayne does a wonderful job at balancing his character to avoid teetering into one moral side. Frances Conroy ("American Horror Story: Murder House," "Six Feet Under") as Arthur's mother is also wonderfully understated.

None are used a lot or particularly excellently, but they all serve their roles in worthwhile ways. If there is a scene stealer,

it would be Leigh Gill ("Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," "Game of Thrones") as Gary, a charming British friend of Arthur's, as he's just a genuinely nice person who feels like the bright spot and gets treated horribly for it.

However, even for the segmented, puzzle piece nature of the narrative, one character isn't really dealt with that much. Zazie Beetz's ("Deadpool 2," "Atlanta") role is introduced, has a few moments and then is disappointingly cast aside. The fate of this character is even left ambiguous, which is disappointing given how concretely the rest of the major impacts on Arthur's life and the results of them are shown.

It is clear though that this is not meant to be a point by point plotted film. Rather this is a character study, a powder keg of a film. Not everything is spelled out and explained, just the pieces that matter in the tale of this man and how he got to this state. Some elements that could be seen as lazy or surface level regarding Arthur's motivations seem almost purposely so.

His is a character whose actions are at the same time meant to be unthinkable and also unfounded. So, the surface level actions that push him to that point are justified in being two-dimensional in order to allow his horrific transformation to remain horrific.

It isn't as well rounded as other comic book films or character pieces, but it's clear that this is going for one specific thing, and the goal is to perfect that one thing so expertly that all the other elements, while still very good, can be forgiven for not being as excellent, as they aren't the focus.

This is also a film that is just, point blank, difficult to think about. Again, there's a difference between glorifying these actions and simply showing them, and "Joker" knows this. It succeeds in not glorifying, but that doesn't mean it is any less upsetting. Controversy will follow this film like a white-hot magnet, and whether or not that is justified will be discussed by critics for months to come.

There is something to respect here, as well. Not since "The Dark Knight," and maybe not even then, has such a particular vision of what was once seen as comic book pulp characters been realized. It achieves what it sets out to do, and it cuts deeply because of that. There is a reason DC's name is actually nowhere on the film itself, apart from the credits mentioning "Based on Characters from DC."

"Joker" is distinctly uncomfortable and dangerous. This is a film filled with white hot rage yet keeps it just distant enough to avoid painting this protagonist as a hero. It is a cautionary tale, not a glorifying one. Those aspects and the film as whole, will likely be discussed for months to come, for good reason.

Its cinematography, music, production designs, everything is impeccable, led by a jaw shatteringly good lead performance. "Joker" is a film that lingers on the mind. One that you might desperately want to forget yet is impossible to. Be warned though, when it's over, you'll need a good, cheap laugh.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DC FILMS, VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES, BRON CREATIVE, JOINT EFFORT, AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES.

JOKER

THE REEL LIFE

Movie reviews by Jacob DiLandro | A&E Editor | @spongejay1

4.5/5

★★★★★

