

Gender imbalance and the consequences essay sample



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BUSTER**

At Lehigh University it is clear right from the start of freshmen orientation that Greek life dominates the social scene and the parties at the university. Men and women are generally judged solely based on the house they belong to and the reputation associated with that house. The Greek culture is revered and accepted, and the house hierarchy is known to a freshman immediately. There are tons of different stereotypes associated with the houses; there are the party houses, the Jewish houses, the smart houses, and the list continues.

In particular, there is also a subculture, which Lehigh possesses, in which the fraternities dominate and mandate the social scene. In particular, the men in the fraternities have all the power when it comes to planning parties and events. After getting acclimated to the university, I realized that fraternity brothers dominate the social scene in terms of parties and events, and place the females at a level below them. There is a clear gender imbalance at the university not only in number, but in practice which places the men above the women, and the women do not question the culture, but instead accept it and embrace it.

After my first week on campus I quickly realized that the fraternities and the fraternity brothers are the masters when it comes to planning parties and partying. This is evident in many ways. For example, the men are the ones who always choose which girls and boys to invite to their parties, the "funness" of the party is very much dependent on the status of the fraternity that is hosting, and lastly ALL parties on campus are hosted at the fraternity houses, NEVER at the sorority houses. The fraternity houses can have any

kind of party they want, and let their houses get trashed, while the girls maintain a clean house at all times.

The girls probably do not complain, and the boys probably do not complain either because of the control they possess at those parties. I will never forget going to my first Lehigh party during orientation, and watching a group of girls flock to a fraternity house in tiny outfits and high heels. There were about fifteen girls in this group, and when they arrived at the door, one of the fraternity brothers examined the first girl he saw and shook his head in disgust. He did not let this group of girls inside his party for no apparent reason except for appearances.

The girls were shocked and confused and walked away in hope of finding another party. This anecdote is just one of the ways that the men show their power and dominance at campus parties in a way that is hurtful and mean. The male dominance on campus has affected all aspects of Lehigh University. I believe that since the men have so much power in planning social events and deciding the guest list at their parties, their authoritarian mentality applies to all activities and endeavors they participate in. There are some dangerous consequences that stem from this mentality.

For example, in many of my classes I have noticed that the men will occasionally laugh at a comment recited by a girl just to embarrass her. I have also seen men occasionally interrupt a woman mid-comment with no regret and no apology. In particular, I have noticed that in the very beginning of the semester, the freshmen boys would always ask the freshmen girls about parties and would be extra friendly and polite so that they could follow

the girls into the parties. After only a few months of being on campus, this routine drastically changed.

Now the freshmen boys get the text invites from their older male friends and only tell certain girls about the information on the party. It is evident that the boys enjoy this power and this secret knowledge and definitely use it in a way to make the girls want to learn more. The positions have reversed so quickly, and the freshmen men have transformed into typical Lehigh male students in only a matter of months. It does not seem that the girls on campus have an issue with this gender imbalance that they face on campus.

It is definitely a benefit to the women that the parties are not at their houses because the house does not get trashed. And, a girl in a sorority will always have a party to go to that her other sisters are going to. Perhaps it is just accepted and is common practice, but I believe that the women on campus deserve to have more power in making decisions about Lehigh nightlife. I believe that the sisters should be able to plan their parties, and perhaps host a few parties (until the house gets trashed). Instead, the women on campus accept the routine and do not question it.

It might be because all the planning and decision making has been done for them which leaves them with very little work. Or perhaps the women would rather just show up without worrying about hosting a bunch of college students and looking out for new freshmen. Maybe I will someday adopt this sentiment once I am initiated in a sorority and look back on this paper shaking my head in embarrassment. However, I believe that this gender hierarchy feeds into a larger issue. I believe that many women on campus

agree with the men and see themselves as below the men and therefore do things to please the fraternity brothers.

For example, in Chelsey Tolerico's article "Halloween, not whoroween" in The Brown and White, Tolerico writes about how the girls on campus dress extremely inappropriately on Halloween in non-existent costumes for the fraternity parties on this holiday. With the exception of a few girls, I highly doubt that any woman enjoys wearing skimpy outfits only to impress herself. I witnessed this firsthand. On Halloween, I spoke to a sorority girl who told me that the frat party she was attending later that evening had a mandatory costume to wear.

I asked what it was, and she told me that all the girls had to dress like one of the Victoria Secret models or no entrance into the party. Interestingly, that party did not occur because of the blackout. It was clear that the girl was hesitant about the costume choice, but could not express her discomfort with fear of being shunned by the men. It is evident that women are constantly trying to impress the men on campus in as many ways as they can. Never have I seen the men dress a certain way to impress the women.

Never have I heard about a fraternity brother asking what to wear to the party to make a good impression. In addition, at the parties the women follow the men around so closely as if they are better than them. If the man directs the women to a different room, they obey. If one of the brothers hands a girl a drink and tells her to have it, she will probably drink it. The women on this campus respect and obey the fraternity brothers

wholeheartedly. This obedience and respect that the brothers receive gives them the ability to treat girls inappropriately and nastily.

There are wider cultural implications that have come from this gender imbalance sentiment on campus that go beyond Lehigh and beyond college life elsewhere. Women on campus should not feel the need to always impress men because that is the norm. Men are not superior to women, and although it may seem that way on a college campus, it is not. I do not think this gender imbalance issue is only present on Lehigh's campus, but is present on many college campuses. Perhaps at other schools, the women have tried to combat the issue by planning parties. Maybe at other schools, the girls do not question their roles and obey the men in the same way.

There are probably very strong women on this campus and other campuses who do not allow the fraternity brothers mandate what they do. Sadly, these types of girls are not the majority. Men should rethink their position on campus because there is too much at stake for them. They are becoming so comfortable in this domineering role that they forget it is not real life. Many of these brothers will eventually have female bosses and will not be able to treat them like a Lehigh girl. The fraternity brothers think they are better than the girls, and this sentiment will hurt them after graduation.

Yes, women in the workplace are treated differently than men, but times are changing and men have accepted that. If a fraternity brother thinks he can act like he did at a Lehigh party at a job interview, he would not get the job. There are many brothers at Lehigh who are very nice and do have respect for the girls, but feel cocky around their fellow brothers. I hope that the

Lehigh male community will realize that their behavior is only acceptable on campus and will learn to grow into mature, respectable men who treat women with the same dignity they treat each other.