Episode 1

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Welcome to our first episode of the university of Oregon, College of Education, Look No Feather podcast. I am Emma Bjorngard Basayne, uh, one of the academic advisors in the College of Education.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** And I'm Ixchel Verdugo and I'm another one of the academic advisors at the College of Education.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** In this first episode, we have two great interviews that we wanted to share with all of you and they're both focusing on engagement and involvement on campus and why it's so important. So the first person we talked to is Jessie Steward. She is the Senior Associate Director for Student Activities and Programs here on campus.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** And then for the second interview, we have Caitlin Roberts, the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, as well as Zach Gosa-Lewis, the Assistant Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** So, as we mentioned, uh, our interviewees will be talking about engagement and involvement here on campus and different opportunities that are available to all of you, but we thought it would be appropriate if we shared a little bit about how we were involved as undergrads, and maybe you can start, you were an undergrad here at the University of Oregon.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** I was. Yeah, so I was involved in quite a few things during my undergrad time here. Um, so I did IMPACT at the very beginning. So I came with my dad for my Introducktion session and he was walking with me to like to different booths and things like that and he handed me one of the IMPACT flyers and he just, you know, gave it to me. And I was like, ah, okay. Like, I guess I'll look into it. I wasn't too excited about it to begin with, but then once I attended their first meeting, I actually ended up continuing with it. I ended up being a mentor and then a coordinator for the program, um, later on my senior year. So all of it ended up connecting from there.

And then I also did MEChA, which is like the Latinx, um, student group on campus. And then a little kind of offset of that was the Ganas tutoring program where we tutored middle school students at Kelly middle school. Um, so that also was helping me with my, um, my degree in education so getting a little bit of that practice with them and yeah so overall it was a good

impact, pun intended, um, on my time at the U of O. I was able to grow and a lot of it was building those connections and a community, um, that I'm still connected with now being an advisor on campus. So it was great. How about, how about you? I know you had a different experience as a, as a transfer student too.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah. Yeah, no. So I started at Santa Barbara City College and then I transferred from there to Cal State Long Beach. Um, and I was a philosophy major. So I just remember during our week of welcome, you know, like, you know, like you walking around checking out all the tables, like, cause the, all the clubs, you know, had their set up. And I saw the philosophy club there. So I was like, oh, I have to go up and introduce myself and I I'm definitely an introvert so that was a little scary, but it did push me to kind of step outside of my comfort zone and I'm really glad that I did because it just instantly connected me with people who had similar interests as I, um, you know, and just introduce me to first year sophomores, juniors and seniors, like all the students in my major. So yeah, it was great. And we're still friends and follow along in their, their professional journeys now, which is, which is great so definitely made friends, you know, that hopefully will be lifelong friends. Um, but yeah. Um, so let's jump into these interviews so that you all can learn about involvement and engagement here at the university of Oregon.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Could you Please state your name and what you do at the U of O.

**Jessi Steward:** Yep. My name is Jessi steward and I work in the EMU with all the student union programs, um, and so that could be everything from the Craft Center to the radio station, to the Center for Student Involvement to club sports.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Perfect. Okay. So I have the second question, um, how does involvement and involvement with student organizations in particular contribute to learning in your opinion?

**Jessi Steward:** I think the importance, um, can come from each student and their experience. Um, some students go there and find community. So they find people that are like them or different than them. Some people find, uh, career paths that are outside of their academic area. So we might have somebody who's a biology major. But really enjoys the arts or enjoys chess or tango dance. Uh, and so I think it's an opportunity to learn outside of the classroom and sometimes it's an opportunity to apply classroom experience. Um, so if you're a journalism major, maybe being a DJ in K WVA radio gives you a little bit of on air experience or practice, uh, before you actually go out into the job world so I think it's all part of an educational process and it happens outside of the classroom, but it's intertwined and interconnected to the entire college experience.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** All right. So next question for you, in your opinion, why should students join clubs and organizations? Like what might be the benefits or the skills that they might gain from that?

**Jessi Steward:** Yeah. Well, you know, in my opinion, you know, the greatest skill that is learned is working with people, which is kind of, I think the baseline skill that we're all working on is we're kind of coming into the job place or figuring out how to manage relationships in in our day-to-day lives. So I think there's something about volunteering your time and energy to coordinate and work with folks towards a common goal, which is just a good life experience.

But there's more than that. Of course there's things like joy and fun, you know, you can actually just do fun things as well as just make like a big difference in the world. So, you know, there's a student group focused on bees and bee health, you know, bee, uh, colony health. So, uh, there's also like real meaningful work that happens, um, that can be done with a group of people more than an individual.

So I would say the range goes from, you know, just a real basic life skill, all the way to, you know, helping society. Change problems that I think folks are, uh, attached to and engage with.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah. I feel like too with the like different cultural clubs or culture clubs, like that can really help you find who you are and, you know, learn about yourself and kind of find joy and pride and all those things as well. Like that was definitely like an experience that I had as an undergrad when I joined like our, um, we basically had an organization for like Indigenous students on campus. And so I'm from Sweden, but I'm Sami, which is the Indigenous people, um, who live in over the different Nordic countries and just being a part of that group. I just got so much out of it on a personal level. Um, as well as academically. Cause then I wanted to take certain new classes I hadn't thought about, you know, so I just feel like there's so much potential. Um, and in many different ways that like you just mentioned.

Okay. So this is a very kind of basic question, but it was something that I know that I thought about as an undergrad. So what does student organizations do when they meet? So if you've never been in a student org or a club before, what do they do?.

**Jessi Steward:** Yeah, I, you know, whatever they want within reason when I say that, because there's obviously things that can't, or shouldn't happen, but in general, I think student orgs get together and they plan the purpose and mission of their group, and then they work on how to execute that. And so that could be putting on events or, um, talking about plans. Or reaching out and connecting with other student groups or the university administration or local community organizations. Um, but really groups when they get together, I think there's a lot of team building that happens normally. And then there's problem solving and problem solving happens through any number of conversations, actions, events, programs, uh, and connections with other organizations.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Thank you. So how would a student get involved in an already existing organization?

**Jessi Steward:** Yeah, this is a particularly interesting question in this moment. Um, so if we were three years ago, I might have a much more simple answer and I will give you the simple answer, but I will acknowledge that it's more complicated in this moment.

So the simple answer is that all student orgs are listed. I would say almost all are listed in Engage, which is an on campus online platform. And that's a good way to kind of go through and look at all the different opportunities. There also are normally opportunities to see and be seen by student orgs so you'll see them, um, tabling in the amphitheater or you'll see a notice on Twitter or Instagram about an upcoming meeting or an event or a program there's also larger activities. So we often have events like the block party or other involvement fairs. So club sports will have an involvement. Fair. Other groups will have fraternity and sorority life will do the same. So there's opportunities to kind of identify that Keystone event and go explore and check it out, um, but what I would say is all student orgs are open to students to come check it out. Right. So they all are open for others to come and see and I encourage folks to probably find them remotely at the moment and then see what opportunities exist, both from the remote aspect and then also some in-person. And we're still figuring out what that in-person looks like, like everyone else in the world, but I, I do think there's, um, there should be plenty of options for online.

And the other piece I would add to that is we don't know where some student orgs land right now, we could have student orgs that have been active for 20 years and right now we don't know who's there. And so I think there's going to be a little bit of a restart in this next year and so I would not be discouraged if you find a group and you don't find the people right away. I think I would be encouraged to kind of lean into that process and start to pull those, um, energy and resources together again. So in this moment, I think we have to find what's there and then find what's not. And both of those are the same important process and work for student orgs.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Okay. So the next question, what are examples of leadership positions that students can hold in a club or organization? And why should they consider a leadership position?

**Jessi Steward:** So my philosophy around leadership positions is that there are both formal and informal, of course, and I think it should be expected that, um, joining a student organization as a sign of leadership, just as a baseline, right? If you are able to manage, going to classes and eating breakfast every day and joining a club, I think you are a part of a leadership cohort that exists, no matter what. Um, within student organizations, there's there's many formal roles, so of course there can be a chair and a vice chair or president. Uh, there can be any number of initiative chairs, so people can step into positions around particular ideas or thoughts within the organization.

But I would also offer that there are many informal or unlabeled leadership positions, um, where people are reaching out to other student organizations or representing themselves and the university as a part of a student organization, there is no way to separate somebody who is a club sports player. Uh, when they are out in the community representing that organization, then there is the president of the club sports team, or the same with the fraternity and sorority life group or a CSI student org or a ASUO student organization.

So when you're a member, I think you step into a leadership role and then you can add on, you know, formal titles and rules. But I don't like to limit leadership to just the formal roles because that's not, that's not where it all lives and it isn't where all the learning happens.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** That's a great answer.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Yeah. I love that too. Just because there's so many transferable skills that come with, even something as simple as tabling, right? Like you are engaging with other people and you are trying to present your organization in a way that's going to make people want to join and be a part of it and grow. There's a lot of outreach there and I think that's an amazing answer. Thank you. Um, so if a student wants to start a new organization, what would be the very first step that they would need to do?

**Jessi Steward:** So I think that first thing is to, um, make sure it doesn't exist already. Occasionally we will have groups that are they, they will come and say, we want to start the crochet club and they don't know that there's already a, U of O crochet at the U of O club or something along those lines. I think the first step is always to check and see if there's an existing club that's already very close, um, and could be combined because we don't want to have 10 groups of the same, uh, and kind of divide, you know, the energy and focus around that.

So if it doesn't exist, if they really want to start a new club, there's a number of different organizations that recognize groups. So that could be the ASUO. Like I mentioned, Center for Student Involvement, clubs, sports, um, Fraternity and Sorority Life. There's also academic student boards that exist in departments and really, uh, each one of them has its own process.

But the main first step is to make sure you know, that it doesn't exist already. So kind of do an environmental scan around that and then to find out what the recognizing body is, and then really make sure you have enough folks to start a club with you because sometimes that's not obvious to people it's not usually a club; 60 is, uh, and somewhere in the middle is also, but you really do have to have sustained student interest and there are different levels of engagement and recognition across the board, um, so the center for student involvement, I think the left, I think they need to have five people to start a student organization, uh, to go to fraternity and sorority life I think that is higher. And I think the bar is a little higher in order to meet the certain criteria that is set in the organization. So that's where it's important to know. The organization that does the recognition and understand what their specific set of requirements are and then understand, you know, what your relationship is with the university. Some organizations are part of the university and some are, um, kind of adjacent or affiliated with the university and there's different roles and responsibilities associated with those two relationships.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** And I have a follow-up question to that. So if let's say like I was a student.and I have kind of a solid membership for starting a new club? Um, how do students know, like, I guess who to go to and like how to know where that club might fall into?

**Jessi Steward:** Yeah, that's a really excellent question. And I think, unless you've been kind of tracing these paths for a long time, it might be hard to know that, but I think there's two central resources. So the Center for Student Involvement and the ASUO are both , central in the EMU and they know all of the other pieces. And so I think as a starting point, CSI, the Center for Student Involvement knows how to, um, kind of send people out into other spaces and also has that kind of first step recognition. If it doesn't exist anywhere else. So I would recommend starting with the Center for Student Involvement or the ASUO, because they really are your kind of student centered student work spots.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** So that was our last question. Do you have any questions that you felt like we should have asked or something you want to add to the conversation?

**Jessi Steward:** You know, the one thing we've been finding, uh, just with some preliminary research is that the more students are engaged in student organizations as well as programs and activities the more likely they're going to have a sense of belonging, right where they're at, but also a sense of retention. So continuing academic pursuits from one year to the next, and I think that's particularly important right now, when it's hard to find community, it's hard to find connection and maybe it's hard to find that sense of purpose outside of the classroom.

Um, that, that there's real value in trying to find these access points and to find those connections with people who are, you know, similar-minded or different minded, uh, but that, that energy and connectedness is helpful and good for you. So I would say, you know, if folks have the capacity, which is also, I think an interesting question to think about is you do have to take care of a lot of things. And so once you have that capacity to go give back and connect with others, I really encourage folks to do it and to do it maybe before they're even a little bit ready. Um, because I think there's so much benefit that comes back, that it's worth your time and energy. So, and that can be a little bit or a lot, but I think even a little bit has a great benefit.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Great. I actually thought of one last question. Were you involved in any clubs, uh, when you were in college and if so what clubs?,

**Jessi Steward:** Yeah, so I studied at the university of Wyoming and I have a fine arts degree. And so we had. Uh, an arts club and it was great. We wrote grants and we opened a downtown art gallery for a year, and it was a great learning experience.

And, um, I learned more in that experience about, you know, project management, connectedness. Um, what does it mean to be in an organization that you have responsibility for? Then I did and many of my other academic classes. And so I, I was probably over involved, as a college student. So it makes sense that I'm in a job where they work with folks who choose to be involved and involved in many opportunities.

Uh, It's a, it's been a nice career path for me to be kind of connected in the university setting and then to create connections in university settings. So yes, and yes, and it's great. It's a really, it's a wonderful place to work and have as a, as an experience, as a student.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Perfect. Thank you so much.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** First question is, if you can state your name and what you do at the U of O?

**Caitlin Roberts:** I'm Caitlin Roberts, and I am the director of fraternity and sorority life.

**Zak Gosa-Lewis:** I'm Zak Gosa-Lewis, and I'm the assistant director of fraternity and sorority life.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Um, so the next question, and this is for Zak, how does involvement and involvement with Greek life, in particular, contribute to student learning, in your opinion?

**Zak Gosa-Lewis:** Yeah, I think, overall, just being involved creates a sense of belonging. Creates a connection to the campus. Uh, I've worked at a lot and attended a lot of, um, less presidential universities. And the thing that we saw there was just happening. Students have a place and feel connected through involvement, whether that be through a housing association or whether it be fraternity and sorority life or a, you know, a club sport or an anime club, whatever it may be having that really contributed to them feeling like that campus was home. Obviously that's very different with UO because our freshmen are on campus and they're there. And they're, you know, intertwined with every bit of what it is to be on campus here in Eugene, but I think sometimes that can even be overwhelming in its own way, so to detach from just feeling like, "Hey, this is home and this is where I go to bed." These involvement opportunities present a good hobby. They present an opportunity for them to kind of expand their skills in a way that they may not feel like they get a chance to and UO is academically challenging, you know, it's, it's a hard school and people work really hard. And I think involvement provides them with an outlet, um, that they get to choose much like an extracurricular or, you know, a, uh, a non-standard class that they don't have to take. It gives them some flexibility to say, well, I'm really interested in this. And I think Greek life really leans into that, uh, quite well. It gives you an opportunity to grow an incredible amount and do things that you don't really think about until you get involved. There's just so many opportunities for folks to learn what they're doing and how they're doing it and how they're evolving into their own person. It's just really something that, you know, in the field. What we like to say is that when done correctly, fraternity and sorority life is one of the best professional development opportunities, and I've heard that a billion times since I was 18 and I joined a fraternity, but it really is true when, when this is all done correctly, when fraternity and sorority life happens, you can't find a better student learning, you know, opportunity because you do everything. There really is just everything that you can do. A lot of our students equate it to they're running small businesses, and it's really true, so, and then you get all the social benefits, so it's really, I think, encompasses. Every bit of everything that you could see, whether it would be club sports, well, guess what, we're playing intermurals, or if you're, you know, doing the business club, well, guess what, we're managing a budget or, you know, we're doing this for fun. Well, guess what? We get socials and different things and community involvement, so it's just really a really awesome opportunity to get a little bit of everything.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** So, I guess this next one is for Catlin. Um, so in your opinion, why should students join Greek life? Like what are the skills or benefits that they can gain from it?

**Caitlin Roberts:** Well, you know, Zak mentioned, um, fraternities and sororities are really one of the most outstanding places to develop as a leader on a college campus, but in addition to that, uh, it, it will often create a smaller community within the larger university community, um, so often when students come to the university, they're coming from far away, um, they're away from home for the first time, and all of a sudden they have all these brothers or sisters in a much larger 3,400 member community to support them and, um, help them with those rough days when they're really missing home. A lot of encouragement for academic excellence as well. Um, we are very lucky at the University of Oregon. Our fraternities and sororities are top-notch in academics. They continuously excel and do better even than the average undergraduate on campus, um, as a whole, so we're really proud of that, and what that means for our students who are involved, is there's always someone to give a little encouragement, to go study with, to help you out when you're struggling with a class, or maybe it has a relationship with a faculty member that can help introduce you to, to get a little extra help. Um, long-term, you know, membership is a lifetime experience, and so when our 18 year old first year students join, oftentimes they aren't thinking about that, but really it is a lifetime experience. And I can't tell you, of course I work in higher education, but I can't tell you how many students I worked with who will come back and say, you know, I had this interview and when they looked at my resume and saw that I was president of my sorority chapter, they immediately said, oh, "that was such a great experience for you" and gives you an introduction, or then they say, oh, "I'm a member of a fraternity or sorority," and there's that connection already, um, when they go to start working and they can build relationships with alumni in the, um, in the area where they go, um, I've moved all over the country. Zak has moved all over the country. And what you find is no matter where you are, you can find a group of your sisters or your brothers, um, to connect with, and that's pretty incredible.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** So, um, the next question, how does a student get involved with Greek life? So maybe I'll start with Zak this time.

**Zak Gosa-Lewis:** Yeah, I think the first thing is just taking the opportunity to look at all the resources we have out there. Uh, one thing that we feel like we're really proud of, and we've done a really good job of with the last, you know, 18 months specifically, but really the last two to three years is putting our information in places where it's easy for students to access. COVID necessitated that for everything to be online, but it really was a great opportunity for us to say, how are we putting stuff out there for folks to see it? Uh, so I'll take the opportunity, you know, to plug first and foremost, our blog that we have, and it's we utilize the block system instead of just our website, because it's just easier to update and access. We're able to post things very fast. It's a lot more interactive for us, and it's a lot easier to work with. So that's actually just blogs.uoregon.edu/uofsl. On there, you've got everything. You've got great reports for folks that are interested. You've got information about every single fraternity and sorority that's on campus. You've got, uh, information about how we responded to COVID and how things are continuing to evolve for us and information specific to that for fraternities and sororities, but most importantly, you've got information on how to join, and that's really the interesting part with this is you just start off with a registration form for two of our councils, which are IFC and Panhellenic. They've got a more structured process, a little bit more fall heavy, but there's opportunities in the winter and spring for both. And then we have our culturally based fraternal organizations, which are up and coming here at UO. We're seeing a lot of growth and development in them in the last almost two years now they've done a fantastic job in COVID to continue to recruit and continue to grow, and so with that, you know, signing up, shooting us an email, uh, if you go to our blog, it shows who oversees, which councils, so you have, if you have specific questions that you don't feel like are answered, you can always shoot myself or Caitlin an email to talk through that, and in addition to that, Uh, with our IFC and Panhellenic, they maintain their own websites and they have student executive boards that are always there to provide a student perspective, so the biggest thing is just taking a look, you know, deciding, "Hey, I want to do this experience or that experience" and always asking questions so I think that joining really starts with asking the question of what experience I'm looking for and then going from there and then registering and shooting emails, and we do everything we can to steward y'all through the process.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** A quick followup question, so as an undergrad, I was a transfer student and I wanted to join a sorority at the time, but I didn't think I could and I was too shy to like look into it further so I never did and I regret it, you know, hearing from, you know, my friends who did, and what a great time they had. Um, but so I'm asking the question for the transfer students out there, can they, uh, can they join? Are there any certain, you know, things they should keep in mind around that?

**Zak Gosa-Lewis:** Absolutely. Uh, usually in normal times we'd be there at tabling at every single transfer introducktion. It's really important for us to make sure that folks know that that opportunity's there and that's honestly, one of the most recurring questions we get is transfer students, not just freshmen or sophomore who may be in between credits, but we have juniors and seniors who transferred to UO and look for that opportunity or they may be coming from a university where they didn't have Greek life and they're interested in it, so absolutely that option is on the table. Um, it's not something that's going to be held against you. In fact, I think with a lot of the transfer students, we see that do end up joining fraternities and sororities, they're in and in leadership roles and working and going to do things a lot faster than our freshmen students are because they've got a little bit of experience, you know, they, they got college handled and kind of understood, and if you're listening to this to this and you're like, well, that guy doesn't know cause I'm transferring and I'm feeling way overwhelmed, even with that. If you don't want to do the leadership, if you don't want to do everything else, you can still come in and make that networking connection with people, and so absolutely transfers. We have people who are last term seniors join our community, and like Caitlin said, it's a lifetime opportunity. It's something that you can do forever. So, absolutely. Please don't feel like there's any restrictions based off of when you're transferring or where you're transferring from, or if you've got the recruitment at a previous institution, none of that, we want you to feel like you have that opportunity to come here, get to see what UO is about and join our community if that's what you want to do.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** All right. So this next one is for Caitlin, so what kinds of events and initiatives are sororities and fraternities involved with and kind of in addition to that, like what would be the time commitment if a student is, um, joining in, on all of these activities?

**Caitlin Roberts:** Oh, boy, that's a big question. Um, we're involved in a lot of everything. Um, I think I'll start with the time commitment ,ah, question. We have a saying that you put into it what you want to get out of it, and so we have members who go to chapter meeting once a week, which is about an hour long and that's all they do and that's fine. Um, they, they still get out of it what they're looking for. Um, and then we have those who become leaders within chapters or leaders within our community who are die-hards and it's like a full-time job for them, and that's where we, Zak and I come in, and say, "okay, are you balancing everything that you need to balance in order to really be a good leader?" but it really is about putting into it, what you want to get out of it. Um, the more time you spend, in theory, the greater experience you're going to get out of, so realistically, I would say on average, um, the members would probably spend like an hour a week in chapter meetings and then maybe five or so hours, total, um, in other events, um, or programs that the organization is doing. Those events and initiatives that we work on from our office, we do a number of events. Um, we host a Greek leadership academy, um, every winter for all of our chapter presidents and our council officers. Um, we have governing councils that oversee our sororities, fraternities, our culturally based fraternal organizations, um, and we have leaders who run those organizations. So they all come together, and do some networking and planning for the year and really a lot of team building. And, um, a big focus for our office is just about community building and getting everybody to know everyone else. . We also host an emerging leaders retreat in the spring. Um, and that is for our emerging leaders who are up and coming and oftentimes people will attend that, and then they go on to become leaders within their own groups or within our community councils. We host a risk management summit that focuses on health and wellness. Service and philanthropy are a key component of fraternity and sorority life, and so we will see chapters oftentimes hosting different philanthropy events, um, organizing service in the local community, or even nationally with their organizations. Um, Zak mentioned intramurals earlier, um, and our fraternities I know are very involved in intramurals , but some of our sororities are as well. Alumni connections, um, we have an organization called Greeks go green that we work with and they're focused on sustainability and they work with the sustainability center in the EMU to really make sure that, as a community, fraternity and sorority life is paying attention to the footprint that we're leaving, um, so they'll, they'll work with us on our events to make sure that we have zero waste and things like that. Um, on campus, we have members who are involved in ASUO. We do a lot of work with EMU programming and, um, the organizations within the EMU and introducktion is a huge part too. Um, we also have members who are involved in residence life, um, as RAs and we work closely with residence life as well. So we're kind of in a little bit of everything on campus, um, and we're really proud of that. We work really closely with the black cultural center. We're so excited to have that connection. Um, and Zak does a lot of work with them, and so that's been exciting to add kind of to our repertoire.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** And I had a follow-up question to that. So you did mention a few times kind of like those culturally based, um, sororities and fraternities, I guess, like, is there anything like special about those besides just them being, um, kind of more like cultural based? Like how do you usually kind of bring that up to students so that they feel like they can find a community there?

**Caitlin Roberts:** Yeah. I think our culturally based fraternal organizations are very special, um, and they are a really great part of our community, great members of our community who are growing and developing. Um, I'm going to let Zak take that answer cause he actually is their advisor directly and can add to that.

**Zak Gosa-Lewis:** Yeah. Thanks Caitlin. Uh, you look at the work that our culturally based fraternities and sororities do per member, I mean, routinely, we're talking about groups that are less than 15 members and they're putting out tops in grades, they're putting out tops in community service hours, and we're not talking about per member community service hours or averages broken across. We're talking about fraternities and sororities that with 15 or less members are sometimes outperforming and outworking, even in philanthropy and in community service, our groups that have a hundred plus members, they really truly are rooted in our community and communities across the country in a way that we don't see with every group. That's not to say those groups aren't working hard, but those groups really personify and exemplify what it is to be and a servant of others and a leader of men, and just doing all of these great things, you even hear their mottoes and it just makes you proud to say, "Man, they're a really awesome group and they're working hard," so with culturally based groups, I just think that there's a deeper connection to what it is to serve and a deeper desire to be entwined with a service community and also to support folks that look like you and, you know, to be in a minoritized student population, Eugene is Eugene and I think that's, you know, not derogatory, but it's fair to notice that it is a predominantly white institution, and it's a predominantly white area here in Eugene and in Oregon overall, those opportunities that are provided by culturally based groups and the connectivity that I hear our students talk about, and the place of feeling of home that they get, even in the midst of all of that is just, it makes it easy to work for, you know, it makes it easy to show up and support. They really do just put their everything into it, so the opportunities really are since, uh, January of 2020, when we really started working with them really is impressive. That's all a testament to the students.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Okay. So the last question is for Caitlin. Uh, so what are examples of leadership positions

students can hold in sororities and fraternities, and why do you think a student should consider

a leadership position?

**Caitlin Roberts:** Oh, my gosh. Well, you know, we talked about how leadership is a big focus for fraternities and sororities, and there are a wide variety of leadership positions, um, within your chapter, anywhere from being the t-shirt chair and designing and ordering t shirts for everyone, um, to being the chapter president, um, most organizations will have, you know, appointed positions or kind of sub positions that fall under their executive council. Really, there's an opportunity for everyone to get involved. Um, the executive council usually takes on the running of the chapter and, um, the business side of things. There's a president who oversees everything. There's someone dedicated to recruitment. There's someone dedicated to educating new members. There will be a secretary. There will be a treasurer, so typical positions that you find within any organization, but many of these groups are dealing with a lot of events ,um, a lot of alumni who want to know what what's going on, large budgets, um, so it really is great preparation for having a job and, um, seeing yourself in your, in the future and what you're going to do, in addition to the chapter positions, um, that we have involvement in our community so we have those governing councils, um, CBFO, which is our culturally based fraternal organizations, IFC, um, is the governing body of our fraternities and Panhellenic, which oversees our sororities, and we have executive councils or executive- executive councils boards for each of those councils as well. And, um, the CBFO is still growing, so they don't have quite as many positions um, but IFC and Panhellenic and have, um, similar positions to the chapters, um, president or president recruitment chair, and they oversee things. The recruitment chair oversees recruitment for the entire community and helps coordinate with the chapters so that is a great experience in terms of, um, really getting to know other people, collaborating with other people, navigating, um, a huge campus like ours and figuring out how you're going to schedule this massive event with 2000 people, where you're going to put everyone and it's a lot of really good practical experience to get you ready for the next step after school.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah. They, they really sound like great resume builders, you know?

**Caitlin Roberts:** Absolutely.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Totally. Um, well that was the last question that we had, but is there anything that you want to add? Something that we didn't ask that you want to make sure to mention and share with the

listeners?

**Caitlin Roberts:** I can't think of anything. I think we covered it all, but, um, we really appreciate this opportunity and we're really excited to welcome new members to our community this fall.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Those were such good interviews. I feel like I learned a lot. Um, okay. So was there something that stood out to you from what Caitlin and Zak were talking about?

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Yeah, definitely. Um, I would probably say the biggest part for me was just hearing about how, like, students of color were getting involved within kind of that Greek life scene on campus. I mean, I knew that they did a lot, but it was nice hearing it from, from Zak to see all of the pieces that they're, um, bringing in how they're building up these groups to make sure that their members are supported, um, and they have a sense of community on campus, and even also me as a student of color, um, even though I didn't do like, um, any of the Greek life pieces, but I knew, and I felt how important it was to have groups on campus that, um, not only shared my, um, my cultural background, but then even those that have a very different cultural background as well, like I was able to engage in different ways, and have conversations around what it meant to be a student of color on campus, and just that general experience, so, um, it was nice to hear from them that, you know, those, those groups are very strong on campus and that they do a lot of work, not only for themselves, but also for the community as a whole, so it's nice that there's, that tie between kind of like the little bubble of U of O and then kind of community-wide um, as well for, for that. Yeah.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah. I was thinking too, and I was interested in hearing your thoughts on this, like, you know, having those types of groups on campus for students of color, it's it must be nice to be able to go to a space where, um, you don't have to like explain everything, people like, you know, your experience and then build from there, and I dunno, like that seems like something that would be very beneficial too about those things.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Yeah. Oh, for sure. Cause I mean, there's kind of, depending on the spaces that you're in, like there's a lot that you either have to explain or you don't that's like inherently understood so I think to be understood at that level, especially as a student or even like, it's also like incoming students who have known nothing of campus or having had that experience, or if they are like first generation students as well, like not having to do a lot of those explanation pieces is very, very helpful. And it makes you feel like an instant connection with people that, you know, went to a completely different high school than you, or a different institution than you did, so it definitely makes a huge difference on how you, you can connect with people.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** And then for, uh, our conversation with Jessi, something that stood out that we both found very, very interesting, and just like a great answer was when she talked about how, when you think about leadership, it's not just about having a leadership, you know, traditional leadership position, like the president or vice president of a club or organization, but that you're also embodying leadership. When you're, you know, you you're a member, you joined the club, like you're you're attending meetings or, um, you were mentioning tabling, right? Like, that's just leadership too.

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Exactly. Yeah. And I think also just like the skills that you can gain from just being in a community with other people and making things happen, cause I mean, a lot of the things that we do are a part of a community so we each have our own role and we push things forward, um, you know, kind of as a collective, so I think her framing it in that way was very powerful, um, because you know, sometimes like if students are just focused on, oh, I need to get to like that coordinator, like president position, um, sometimes I think, you know, you can miss a little bit of those other pieces where, you know, you you're having an impact in very different ways, even if it could be like behind the scenes or, you know, in, in other ways, but I don't know if you had any other thoughts about like what, you know, or even for you, like personally, what that has meant as like either a transfer student or, you know, just your involvement with like the philosophy club as well.

**Emma Bjorngard Basayne:** Yeah. I think like, for me, this sounds so like utilitarian, but like, joining the philosophy club and then, at first I was just a member, but then, you know, kind of moved my way up in the little club, it did help me in terms of building my resume, um, which, so I went to grad school for philosophy after, and part of my, you know, graduate school application, you know, you had to include your resume, and as an international student, I'm I was an international student at the time, like it was hard for me to gain certain experiences cause I couldn't work off campus for example, um, so like having those types of leadership positions or being a member, but having experience of like, you know, putting together an event, like if I had a guest lecture, like I could talk about those skills that I gained and put them in my resume and have something to share with graduate school, you know? So like from it, from that perspective, that was very helpful, um, and I think for other international students out there, like it really could be too, you know?

**Ixchel Verdugo:** Right. Exactly. So, we have come to the end of our episode, but before we let you go, we're going to share a little self-care tip from Mary Marchetti. She's another one of our academic advisors at the College of Education and a graduate teaching fellow, um, she is also a student in the counseling psychology PhD program, so, we will kick it to Mary.

**Mary Marchetti:** Hi everyone, and thanks to my colleagues for that a really informative discussion. I'm very excited to join each episode of this podcast with a brief self-care tip, so these might vary from specific coping techniques to general ideas or suggestions, but will always be intended to encourage our listeners to prioritize their wellbeing and nurture their own resilience. Now I want to add a quick disclaimer, that mental health is as complex as it is important and the brevity and scope of the segment is not intended to stand in for mental health care or medical advice, or even to suggest that self care alone is sufficient for promoting mental health. Instead, our hope is to motivate and help prepare you to take steps, to manage stress and care for your whole self, not just your academic self in the ways that you can, and so I'll try to pull in tips that consider the many different factors that impact mental health and always link to resources in the episode notes so that you can take those tips far beyond this space, so with that in mind, and with this being the inaugural episode, today's self-care tip is to ask for help. So this may sound overly simplistic. I want to recognize that, but oftentimes this is actually the hardest part of addressing the mental health need, so whether you're a returning student or new student, you might find that you're not sure who to turn to for help when you need it, or maybe you feel a sense that you need to solve all of your problems alone in college. You might also feel nervous to open up to someone or worried that your concern isn't clear enough or big enough, or even too big to seek help for, and those feelings are all incredibly common, but thankfully, there are a ton of resources and people here on campus to help support you. No concern is the wrong kind to reach out about and being proactive about your mental health is actually a really great strength and a great skill to develop or enhance while you're in college. Oftentimes talking with a friend, a family member, um, a trusted instructor, mentor, or even an advisor is a good starting place. If you're not sure how to approach that conversation, um, check out the guide by National Alliance on mental illness, which is linked in the episode notes, um, which focuses on exactly that question, and I think offers some great tips. We also have the university counseling services on campus, who offer a huge range of mental health services to students from group and individual therapy to brief consultations and community referrals. And they also have a really great blog and a whole section on their website dedicated to self care. Um, and they also have information about crisis support and things like that, so I really recommend checking out their website to learn more, which is linked in the episode notes. And finally, I wanted to mention the duck nest, which is another place that students can look to for mental health support. So the duck nest is a campus center that's focused on helping students achieve balance and wellness in their lives. The Duck Nest is located, um, in the EMU and they're open and free to all students, um, so they offer a ton of workshops, presentations, and other resources, um, most of which are virtual right now at the time that I'm recording this, but I do recommend checking out their website, which is again, linked here to learn what their latest services look like and access their virtual content. So that's it for today's self-care tip, thank you for listening and take good care.