



*Kristen Glaze, president, Panhellenic Council; Maria Velazquez, president, Kappa Delta Chi; Victor Gamboa, president, Multicultural Greek Council; Melissa Zuk, president, Orvis Student Nurses Association; Junlei Du, Chinese Students and Scholars' Federation; LaTasha Porter, Black Student Organization; Jeremiah Todd, president, Interfraternity Council; David Lynn, Men's Rugby; Bua Srisilpa, treasurer, International Club; Ben Becerra, Wolf Pack Veterans; Molly Hunsaker, Mackay Rockhounds; Eli Reilly, president, ASUN; Meagan Carter, Women's Rugby; Kathleen Wright-Bryan, Native American Student Organization; and Sheena Harvey, Black Student Organization.*

# Student clubs and organizations: The heartbeat of the University

By Melanie Robbins '06M.A. Photo by Jeff Dow.  
Additional photos provided by ASUN and University Archives.



**T**he learning that goes on outside the classroom is as rich as the learning that occurs inside the classroom, according to Vice President for Student Services Shannon Ellis.

“Students spend 16 hours in class each week, but another 152 outside the classroom,” she says, noting that top researchers on student life concur that when students join an extracurricular activity such as a club, organization, fraternity, sorority or student government, they have a higher likelihood of graduating than students who aren’t as engaged.

According to Ernest Pascarella and Patrick

Terenzini, authors of *How College Affects Students*, involvement on campus is positively related to student satisfaction, persistence, and learning and development in a variety of dimensions, Ellis notes.

In addition, George Kuh, author of *Student Success in College*, writes, “What students do during college counts more in terms of what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to school.”

With more than 250 clubs and organizations to choose from, the University provides a range of opportunities for involvement that set it apart from other learning spheres.

“Clubs and organizations are what makes this a vibrant campus,” Ellis says. Under the auspices of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada or the Graduate Student Association, clubs and organizations fall broadly into seven categories: social, multicultural, academic, religious, political, sports, service, or some combination of these. Leadership of the campus Greek system of sororities and fraternities is also included under ASUN’s umbrella.

The variety of clubs is limited only to students’ imaginations: To become an officially recognized club, a student needs only to find nine like-minded friends and a faculty



University Opera Company, presentation of "Olivette", 1900. INSET: University Social Club announcement from the 1899 Artemisia.

adviser. Just about any concept is acceptable. Currently, the campus boasts several just-for-fun, social clubs such as the Apple Poppers, a club devoted to golfing apples around campus, and the 1457 Club, a group made up of students who were roommates in the house at 1457 N. Virginia St.

Multicultural clubs and organizations range from the Mosaic Club, which is based on the ideals of President Jimmy Carter to embrace and be sensitive to cultural differences; to the Chinese Students and Scholars' Federation, an official organization affiliated with the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco; to Kappa Delta Chi, a Hispanic sorority.

The Mackay Rockhounds and the Orvis Student Nurses Association exemplify the numerous academically oriented clubs associated with fields of study. Major faiths from Islam to Buddhism to Christianity are well represented in clubs, as well as political views from left to center to right.

Sports include men's and women's rugby teams, men's and women's lacrosse, skiing,

boxing, dancing and "ultimate frisbee," among many. Service clubs abound and are represented by the globally connected Circle K, which is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, and

*"Regardless of which graduate institution I go to, I will forever bleed blue and I will always be a member of the Wolf Pack."*

*Eli Reilly, student body president*

Wolf Pack Veterans, which not only provides support to veterans but also hosts fund-raising events to provide scholarships to veterans who are pursuing higher education.

The GSA hosts a number of graduate-level clubs, including Women in Dialog, a group that brings distinguished speakers to campus, and the Indian Student Organization, an international student group.

In addition, the School of Medicine hosts student organizations including the Student Outreach Clinic, which has been operating a public clinic committed to providing free, quality medical care to the uninsured since 1966.

## HISTORY OF CLUBS

Clubs and organizations have been a part of campus life since the beginning. The 1900 *Artemisia* includes an article on the history of literary societies at the University, which notes that when the University opened in Reno on March 31, 1886, "all the students then attending were enrolled in a sort of literary society under the direction of Professors McCammon and Willis." The school was closed for several months and reopened under President Leroy D. Brown and a new literary society was formed. "The Philomathean, it is



*Students in the Commerce Club, 1921.*

weekly meetings, did much to foster a true literary spirit," the writer notes.

The Aldephi Literary Society was formed "in the autumn of '92," according to the 1899 *Artemisia*. David Lynn, an international business major and member of the Men's Rugby Team, is proud to claim that his club is longest-standing club on campus today, having been around since 1898.

The the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association are no longer active on campus, having been replaced by numerous other Christian service organizations, such as the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, but are among the first and most popular clubs established at the University of Nevada.

The first meeting of the "College Y.M.C.A." was held "in Assembly Hall, on Sunday, May 7, 1897," according to the 1899 *Artemisia*. Ten members attended that initial meeting along with University President Joseph Edward Stubbs.

The "U.N.Y.W.C.A" was organized March 25, 1898 with 19 charter members, according to *Artemisia*. Both clubs had goals similar

to the goals of many student organizations today: to develop students' character and to help them form bonds of friendship. One of the College Y.M.C.A.'s stated goals was "to promote the highest and most symmetrical development of manhood," while the U.N.Y.W.C.A.'s was "to infuse into the college life of the young women the sympathy and sense of comradship [sic] so much needed by those away from home."

The 1899 *Artemisia* includes announcements for the Crescent Club, a debating and literary society, which had five officers, including a "sergeant-at-arms", and the University Social Club. The latter met "every second Friday each month in the gymnasium," and was responsible for organizing dancing parties.

In 1902, the Crucible Club, a group for mining or engineering students, was formed. In 1909, the Agricultural Club, which became known as "The Aggies," was formed.

Today, there are a variety of active clubs for students in the College of Science, College of Engineering, and College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources,



*Human Powered Vehicle Challenge Club at competition, spring 2008.*



*Hawaii Club Luau, spring 2009.*



*Emma Garcia, Greek Recruitment fall 2009, talking to new students at orientation.*



*International Club, Night of All Nations, spring 2009.*



American Association of University Women Club, International Women's Day Parade, spring 2008.



ASUN Club Fair, fall 2008.



Uncle Meat's Illegitimate Children, 1972.



Ski Team Fan Club Club Fair, fall 2008.

*"When I didn't have friends my freshman year, [members of the Black Student Organization] became some of my best friends and they have helped me transition all the way through my college life."*

*LaTasha Porter, journalism major/BSO member*

including the John Mackay Club, the student chapter of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration; the Society of Women Engineers; and CABNR Student Ambassadors, among many more.

## WIDE-EYED FRESHMAN

Eli Reilly, student body president, history major and president of the 1457 Club, remembers being a "wide-eyed freshman" from Las Vegas when he first set foot in Nye Hall in 2005. "I didn't really know what I was doing. I didn't know a lot of people." But his resident assistant (aka RA) convinced him into coming to a Residence Hall Association meeting. "I had nothing better to do on Tuesday nights when they met," he says.

As it turned out, there was an opening on the Residence Hall Council for public relations director. "I was sort of savvy at Photoshop," he remembers. "The job was to make the advertisements for all of the residence hall programs, so I applied for the position and I got it. That was the beginning."

Reilly, who will graduate in 2010 and hopes to go to graduate school at Stanford University, notes that without realizing it, his early involvement in an organization led to long-lasting friendships, set him on a path toward success and gave him a deep connection to campus that will never fade: "Regardless of which graduate institution I go to, I will forever bleed blue and I will always be a member of the Wolf Pack."

He can't say enough about the value of what he calls "co-curricular" engagement, whether within the Greek system, student government or clubs and organizations, "Clubs and organizations shouldn't be called 'extracurricular' activities—They are co-curricular. The University experience is the net fusion of being in and out of class and learning all the time. You develop your brain cognitively in the classroom—you learn new things. But you also develop 'psycho socially,' as they call it, outside the classroom."

Clubs and organizations supplement what's being taught academically and serve as a "laboratory" in which to apply concepts and skills learned in the classroom.

Learning to relate well to others, to work with difficult people in a professional setting, for example, are not typically covered in classroom lectures. But within a club or organization, there are abundant opportunities to hone those skills, including leadership skills, Reilly notes. "You can be the smartest person in the world, but if you can't relate to other people, you will be limited in your ability to succeed in the real world."

The fundamental challenges of interacting with people remain the same whether at a high level of society or within a small club or organization, he says: "There's not a lot of difference between being on the executive board of a club or a member of the ASUN, and being the president of the United States. It's all about basic interactions between people."



Concrete Canoe team at national competition, 2009.

## NETWORKING

Ro Lazzarone '03 (marketing), who was a member of the American Marketing Association Collegiate Chapter as a student, says his experience in the club was a lot of fun, but also taught him how to network: "The most memorable time was when a group of us from the Reno chapter attended the national conference in New Orleans. Not only did we meet a lot of great people from other schools across the country, but we also learned how other chapters operated and brought that information back to our chapter in Reno. Seven years later, I am now using those skills to promote my business and myself, and I still keep in contact personally and professionally with a few people I met at the conference."

Lazzarone is a partner and financial services professional with The Lazzarone Group, a Reno-based insurance and financial services company. He stays connected to the University through membership and involvement with the Alumni Association. He is a current Alumni Council member, and past president of both the College of Business Alumni

Association and the Young Alumni Chapter.

Rita Laden '96Ed.D, a professor of educational leadership and current Nevada Alumni Council member, who has served the University and its students since 1984 in many capacities, including associate vice president for Student Life Services, says she has always encouraged freshmen to join a club or two. "If you are in a club, you have social connections with your peers, but also with your faculty adviser, which is key because research shows that students who are connected socially with others on campus and with faculty have a much better chance of persisting through four years and succeeding in college."

Connecting to a faculty member can be easier when that connection is less formal than in an academic setting where the student must earn a grade, Laden says.

Club and organization members are also connected to campus by involvement in activities such as Homecoming and Mackay Week. "If you are in a club, you are more likely to be connected to something outside the classroom," Laden says.

## Pop Quiz!

Find out how much you know about University of Nevada, Reno students.

- The average entering GPA of new University of Nevada, Reno freshmen in fall 2008 was:
  - 3.36
  - 3.01
  - 2.85
  - 3.50
- The six-year graduation rate for students entering fall 2002 was:
  - 57.5%
  - 44.7%
  - 47.9%
  - 60.3%
- The University's enrollment for fall 2008 was 16,867. 12,789 were undergraduates. How many undergraduates are currently Millennium Scholars?
  - 6,217
  - 5,368
  - 2,870
  - 1,236
- The presidential scholarship (\$5,000/year) is awarded to students who are entering freshmen with a minimum 3.50 GPA and 1360 on the SAT or 31 on the ACT. How many will be enrolled at the University in fall 2009?
  - 81
  - 54
  - 28
  - 92
- Where do our students come from?
  - 92% from Nevada; 7% from out-of-state and 1% from other countries
  - 82% from Nevada; 16% from out-of-state and 2% from other countries
  - 75% from Nevada; 20% from out-of-state and 5% from other countries
- In-state tuition cost per credit in fall 2009 will be:
  - \$115.75 undergraduate and \$150.50 graduate
  - \$200.25 undergraduate and \$325.50 graduate
  - \$142.50 undergraduate and \$214.75 graduate
- The cost of attendance at the University is how much annually?
  - \$21,000 a year
  - \$25,000 a year
  - \$15,000 a year
  - \$30,000 a year
- How many freshmen in fall 2008 had financial need?
  - 36%
  - 25%
  - 55%
  - 43%
- What is the average indebtedness of a University graduate on financial aid?
  - \$14,657
  - \$25,432
  - \$10,923
  - \$32,004



*International Club, Night of All Nations performance, spring 2009.*

## CAMPUS FAMILY

Of particular importance is the role clubs and organizations have in creating a family-like atmosphere for students who may be experiencing atypical life circumstances, such as minority and international students, Laden notes. “It’s especially important for minority groups and students of color to find a “safe haven.”

The International Club, which is popular, serves this purpose. “When international students come to campus, they don’t know anybody and their family could be five thousand or ten thousand miles away,” Laden says. “At least at first, they need to connect with others who are having the same experiences that they have.”

Bua Srisilpa, an international business major from Bangkok, Thailand and the treasurer of the club, says that she has had a great time being in the club. “Oh my gosh, I enjoy it so much!” she says. “I meet so many people from all around the world. The club has opened my eyes to people from different countries. They share their experience from

other countries, which has helped me.”

Mui Condon ’02 (French) was actively involved with the International Club as a student, serving in several capacities,

*“I was immediately attracted to the diverse population that the I-Club brought together.”*

*Mui Condon ’02 (French)/past president, International Club*

including president. “I was immediately attracted to the diverse population that the I-Club brought together. The best thing about the club was the ability to meet, learn and converse with students from around the

world.” Although Condon immigrated to the United States at the age of three from Vietnam, and technically was a U.S. citizen during her college years, she felt it was important “to promote internationalism on campus with the exceptional international student population we had at Nevada.” Condon currently works on campus as a University Events manager.

The Black Student Organization, a 30-year-old, multicultural club, also offers students a place where they can be themselves.

LaTasha Porter, a journalism major who will graduate in December, has been a member of the BSO, since she was a freshman. “It’s like a family,” she says. Coming from Las Vegas, she was alone at first. “When I didn’t have friends my freshman year, they became some of my best friends and they have helped me transition all the way through my college life.”

Sheena Harvey ’06 (interior design), a former BSO president who is currently working on her second degree in nutrition, also became a member of BSO as a freshman. “It helped me focus, not just on my studies, but on extracurricular activities, which are



*Sherry Rupert '05 (finance) was president of the Native American Student Organization while a student. Now she is president of the Native American Alumni Chapter, which seeks to partner with the student group and recently co-hosted the Spring Powwow along with students.*

important,” Harvey says. “BSO helped me meet new people. You learn things about the campus, you gain networking and resources.”

The Native American Student Organization offers the same friendly, student-oriented atmosphere to Native American students and their friends. Kathleen Wright-Bryan, a member of the organization and member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, says “The transition from reservation life to a more urban life is a difficult one. What our club promotes is a family away from your family.”

Sherry Rupert, '05 (finance) the executive director of the State of Nevada Indian Commission, remembers seeking out the Native American Student Organization when she transferred to Nevada as a junior. “I felt that for me to be more comfortable, I should find more Native Americans, so I asked at the Center for Student Cultural Diversity and discovered there was a club.” Rupert, a member of both the Washoe Tribe and the Benton Paiute Tribe in California, thrived within the club, becoming the president.

While an undergraduate, Rupert recalls students raising money by serving food at Reno-Sparks Indian Colony events, as well as selling Indian tacos at basketball games in order to send club members to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. “That was phenomenal,” she says. “A lot of our members come from rural areas. This gave us an opportunity to go to the nation’s capital and see first hand the things you hear about in the news. Many of the students had never been out of the state.” Rupert is the current president of the Native American Alumni Chapter.

## EVENTS THAT EDUCATE

These multicultural groups host some of the largest and most popular annual events on campus: International Club hosts Night of All Nations, BSO hosts the BSO Ball, and the Native American Student Organization co-hosts the Spring Powwow along with the Center for Student Cultural Diversity and the Native



*Nu Alpha Kappa Fraternity, Club Fair, spring 2008.*



*American Indian Organization, 1980.*



*The Nevada Lacrosse Club team practice on the Intramural Fields, 2008.*



*Women Without Borders Club, International Women's Day Parade, spring 2008.*



University of Nevada, Reno women's Mackay Muckers team celebrates their second-place finish at the International Intercollegiate Mining Competition in Butte, Mont., 2009.

American Alumni Chapter. Club-sponsored events such as these not only help students connect to campus, but help educate the campus about the diversity of the world, Laden says. "I really appreciate these events where I can learn about other cultures."

Reilly says multicultural clubs and organizations have educated him and opened his eyes, too: The multicultural Greek organizations—a new branch of Greeks that fall under traditional Greek organization principles and standards, but whose focus is primarily to serve various ethnic groups, the University has five such fraternities and sororities—put on a "step show" every year. "I had never been to a step show. I didn't even know much about them. It's a dance competition. After I went to the show, I realized how cool it was."

Reilly also attended a gay pride rally for the first time to support the Queer Student Union, a political/social club that supports progressive GLBTQ issues. "I'm not gay, but I went to the gay pride rally because the friends I

met in that organization turned me on to the issues that people in those communities are

*"The transition from reservation life to a more urban life is a difficult one. What our club promotes is a family away from your family."*

*Kathleen Wright-Bryan, justice management major/Native American Student Organization member*

facing. I support those causes." That rally, as well as other grassroot efforts, led the Nevada Legislature to overturn Governor Jim Gibbons'

'67 (geology), '73 M.S. (mining/geology) veto of a bill that banned domestic partnerships. "We are living in great times!" Reilly says of the effect of the political movement he supported.

## GREEK LIFE

Reilly also endorses the character-building effects of Greek life, noting that it is often misunderstood: "People sometimes perceive the Greek system as a lot of drunks who go out and party. Is that true in some cases? Yes, it is. But at the same time, the core of these organizations, regardless of how the implementation of that might be perverted, is about building better people. That's what sororities and fraternities are all about, and that's why they have academic standards to be in them." Reilly notes that the Greek organizations at Nevada contribute thousands of hours of community service every year, often helping charitable organizations.

The Greeks now have three governing bodies on campus: The Panhellenic Council,


formed in 1916, governs sororities; the Interfraternity Council, formed in 1921, governs fraternities; and the Multicultural Greek Council, formed April 24, 2007, governs sororities and fraternities that have a multicultural or ethnic focus.

Even though Reilly did not support Gibbons' stand on domestic partnerships, they are Sigma Nu brothers for life. "The first time I met him," Reilly says, "I gave him the Sigma Nu handshake and he said, 'You're a Sigma Nu brother!' It's a small world."

## LIFELONG LOYALTIES

Whatever combination of connections a student makes through academics, clubs, organizations, fraternities or sororities, it all adds together to build a successful future, filled with friends and lifelong loyalties.

"People don't come right out and say it, but most people recognize the importance that the University played in their lives," Reilly says. "It laid the foundation that gave them their start."

When faculty, staff or other students invest their time and energy in helping a student grow and become a more capable human being, the payoff is loyalty. "When you boil it all down, the main reason people stay committed to an institution is relationships," he says. "I feel that this University really cares about me. I honestly feel that way." 

## Joiners Unite!

*Were you super involved while attending Nevada? Well, why let graduation stop you? The Nevada Alumni Association offers a dues-paying membership program, as well as access to more than two dozen alumni chapters. Many of our chapters are alumni versions of student organizations—including the Native American, International, Rugby and ASUN Past Officers Alumni chapters. There are also groups based on where you currently live or your college major. For a complete list of alumni chapters, as well as Nevada Alumni Association membership benefits, please visit [www.unr.edu/alumni](http://www.unr.edu/alumni).*



Photo by Jeff Dow

## The Joe: One year later

The Joe Crowley Student Union (dubbed "The Joe") recently celebrated its first anniversary as the new hub of student life on campus. It opened during the fall of 2008 and quickly offered a comfortable atmosphere for students, alumni, and the community. The 167,000-square-foot building cost \$66 million and was paid for entirely by student fees. The City of Reno gave the building its green award, recognizing the environmentally sound elements that were incorporated in the project designs.

One year later, The Joe houses a variety of restaurants and retail venues, including the two-story ASUN bookstore; offices for ASUN, student publications, the Center for Student Cultural Diversity, and most campus clubs and organizations; a state-of-the-art, 220-seat theater; a grand ballroom; and five fireplaces.

### The Joe since its opening:

- Number of events hosted —6,281.
- Number of reservations (meetings and events)—32,456.
- Amount of energy that the solar panels have collected since installation—369,440 kilowatt-hours (and growing).
- Number of textbooks sold at the ASUN bookstore—203,774 books, generating \$11 million.
- Restaurants Opening: Port of Subs, Panda Express, Villa Fresh Italian Kitchen, Starbucks, Keva Juice, Tahoe Creamery, Spudistro and Cantina del Lobo.
- Starbucks has had 293,626 total transactions since opening in The Joe, including 26,268 cups of drip coffee and 4,426 Caramel Frappuccinos sold.
- Keva Juice has sold 33,911 smoothies and 630 shots of wheatgrass.
- Number of film presentations—456.
- ASUN services residing in the building—The Nevada Sagebrush newspaper, InSight magazine, Brushfire Literature and Art Journal, WolfPack Radio, and Campus Escort Service.
- Number of clubs and organizations served—259 ASUN clubs; 522 ASUN events hosted; \$172,878 awarded to clubs and organizations by ASUN.
- A few community events hosted at The Joe—The Green Summit, Diwali, Brianna Dennison Vigil and Safety Awareness, City of Reno events, EDawn and Artown.
- ASUN Accounting Office received 9,085 visitors.
- ASUN Legal Services, including notary services, saw 353 clients.

To learn more about activities at The Joe, visit [www.unr.edu/studentunion](http://www.unr.edu/studentunion).

—Crystal Parrish