

## Finding My Home

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I came to the University of Vermont (UVM) as a transfer student from NHTI Concord's Community College. As a transfer student, I wasn't required to live on campus, so I took advantage of the opportunity to save money and lived a town over with a friend of mine. I had met a few people during my transfer orientation, but after that day I was only able to get back in touch with one of them. As classes started to begin, I felt alone on UVM's vast campus and the large lecture classes, which held more students than my entire high school, made it overwhelming to reach out to my fellow classmates. I kept thinking back to the men and women I had talked to at the Fraternity and Sorority Life table during my orientation and how excited they were to share their experiences with me and answer my questions. Seeing the fliers posted around campus and attending the pre recruitment events brought me hope this loneliness I felt wouldn't last for much longer. For those first few weeks of school, all I could think about was recruitment, and how much I hoped that this would be where I would find my UVM family.

As excited as I was to start a new chapter in my life at UVM, I couldn't help but long for the comfort and home I had found at NHTI. My reason to transfer was purely because I wanted to pursue a degree that was not offered there. In my one year at NHTI, I met incredible people who helped me grow as a person and who instilled a passion in me to be a student leader and a foundation of skills to go with it. When I arrived at UVM, I knew I had to find a group of people who reminded me of the family I had to leave behind, a family that would keep me motivated and always be by my side. After seeing the lifelong friendships my mom found with her sorority sisters, I knew joining a sorority would be something I'd want as part of my college career.

My recruitment experience reinforced my initial belief that UVM was where I belonged, and my home within UVM specifically was in the Panhellenic community. On the first day of formal recruitment, I met a fellow potential new member who quickly turned into someone I am proud to call not only my sister but my best friend. Due to car issues, I was only able to attend the last round of the third night, but the recruitment team put in the effort to ensure I was able to see the two chapters who had invited me back. Moreover, they made me feel like a valued member of their community by going above and beyond to make sure I was able to make it to the next morning's events. The support and acceptance I had felt by the last day of recruitment was so heartwarming and just made me feel like I was home. It was that night when I knew, regardless of the chapter I joined, I had found my home in the greater Panhellenic community.

The moment I was inducted into Alpha Delta Pi I no longer felt like a transfer student, and I truly started to identify as a catamount. My sisters made UVM feel like home to me, helped me up when I was feeling down, and together we spent countless hours laughing throughout the past four years. I no longer walked UVM's campus feeling alone, and the large campus that once intimidated me instantly felt small as I saw a familiar, loving face with almost every step I took. The love I found within this organization inspired me to give back through leadership positions and mentoring newer members both at UVM and nearby colleges, and from those experiences I received even more love and support from my Alpha

Delta Pi and Panhellenic sisters. I was given the opportunity to build upon the skills I had gained from NHTI and utilized my prior knowledge when problems needed to be solved. The hole that was formed from leaving my NHTI family was instantly filled, and I was overcome with a great sense of relief knowing I now had two families sending their support and encouragement throughout my college years. Without the support of my sisters I do not know if I would have been able to come to the conclusion of what I want to pursue after college, or if I would have had the motivation to put more than 100% into my academics. With my collegiate experience coming to an end, I am excited to see what new adventures await me as an alumna, including meeting all the influential women who I have yet to cross paths with.

Fraternities and sororities can be a significant positive force in the life of a transfer student. Be open to recruiting them, and find ways to promote the experience to them, even if they do not fit the mold of the ideal freshman student. In return, we can give you our time, passion, and gratitude for providing us with our new home.